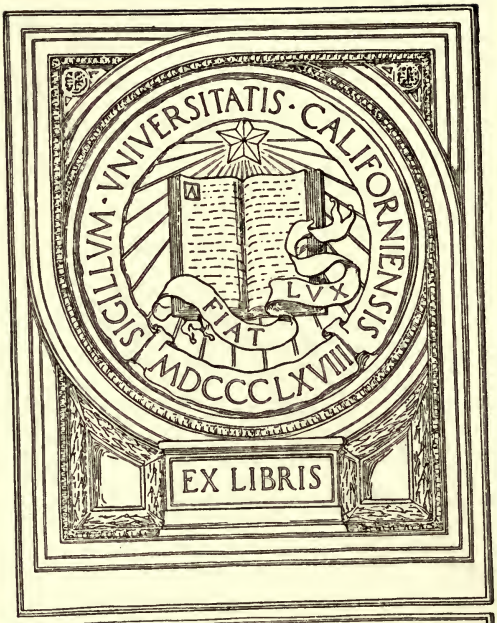
The Sheaf

RANKIN


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
FIAT LVX
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

N3
R211
S

Genie L. Carpenter.

May 1886.

G. W. Davis.

THE SHEAF:

A BUNDLE OF POEMS,

BY

GEORGE CASTLE RANKIN.

"*Bind up the sheaf*
Of thy gathered thought."

MINNEAPOLIS:
JAMES S. RANKIN.
1882.

Copyright, 1882, by
James S.. Rankin.

INTRODUCTION.

"The Sheaf," the first piece of this collection, was written while the author was working in the wheat fields of Clay Co., and was accidentally preserved from the usual fate of his earlier productions. It suggested the title to this volume, and was therefore given the post of honor. "The Prophet's Appeal," which commences on the second page, was published in 1877, when the author was sixteen years old. If a strict chronological arrangement had been followed it would have been placed first, followed by "The Sheaf," "The Prairie Fire," "Defeated," and "Thanksgiving," in the order named. The greater part of his literary work during his eighteenth year, so far as preserved, will be found in the first part of this book.

"The Prairie Fire" was suggested by seeing a young man, armed with a match, start an extensive conflagration. "By the River in Winter" describes a valley of the Buffalo River in Clay County, where the trees, unlike those of Minnesota generally, really looked like "pillars," large, straight and upright, and the "beaver stumps" were abundant. The small stream, at this point, rushing down from the uplands to the valley, is pure, winding, well shaded and otherwise attractive, and had its full share in awakening the poetic sensibilities of the city boy who had so suddenly found himself in this new world of nature and freedom. For him it was a life full of health to body and mind. He grew rapidly, and expanded in every way — leading continually to the sad thought of "what might have been" could he have remained there.

963814

As previously announced, LUTHER OSBORN, Esq., of the Glyndon *News*, whose acquaintance with the deceased rendered him, in great measure, independent of other sources of information, consented to prepare the "suitable biographical memoirs," which are generally appropriate in such cases, and seemed to be demanded in this. Mr. Osborn's paper contains a note which says, "'Biographical Sketch' would be a misnomer; call this a 'MEMORY LEAF.' *You* will prepare the Introduction." It being too late to make other arrangements, I find it convenient to use Mr. Osborn's very acceptable contribution as a part of this introductory chapter.

MEMORY LEAF.

I count it a strange, sad joy to write a preface to the works of George Castle Rankin. In this case I cannot claim to be an impartial friend or critic — but partiality for the dead is safe, and may be praiseworthy. I warmly admired his graces and gifts, and fervently thank God for the gift of grace that lighted up his last year with the one thing needful to poet or artist strength or beauty. I plead guilty to an enthusiasm for my youthful friend and the work of his fancy, whose color is heightened by remembering what hand I had in bringing him before men as a verse-writer. Readers of this book are entitled to know this my bias, and may make the most of it.

A rare acquaintanceship with the father of young Rankin, begun at Minneapolis in 1876, was the way I came to know him at fifteen years — a shy youth, gentle to femininity, impressing me not strongly so much as strangely among printing-office associates. Brought together but casually until 1878, to me he was during those two years only the elder son of his father, my friend. Then Providence brought me to Clay County, where I founded a newspaper and met George again,

a young country schoolmaster and farm worker. He entered my new printing office in Glyndon, and likewise became a member of my household. For almost a year that he was with me, in humble labors, at meagre compensation, I never quite solved the problem of his industrial status : in all the daily grime of types and smear of ink, there was a refinement of spirit, a gentle individuality, and an unconscious self-assertion so allied to faithful duty-doing as to keep it ever an open question whether we were master and apprentice so much as learners of each other — myself generally at the foot! I had had hints of his blossoming powers as an artist in rhyming, not clear enough to make my first requests imperative in regard to his writing for the *News*. He was coy indeed. But after two months, when November was closing and expectation had lulled, a bit of MS. on my desk rewarded my effort and waiting. The production is here given as "Thanksgiving"; and I remember with what peculiar relish it came for that festival week's issue of the *News*, whose leading editorial utterance had a certain sombreness which some of the paper's good friends were pleased to say was doleful ! Possibly George's author courage had been helped to the sticking point by my reprinting the week before from the *Collegian*, of Granville, Ohio, "The Prairie Fire," which was the second in order of his poems that had seen print. There followed, written for the *News*, the "Scourge of the South," in the '78 day of yellow fever relief; "The Old Year," a watch-night production; and later in the winter "By the River" appeared. At this came a breeze of interest that showed his writing was claiming neighborhood attention, at least. One of many straws that showed the way this breeze was blowing was a whispered asking of me one day, by a generous patron and good critic, if George did really write that piece ! His contributions to the *News* did not cease with his return to Minneapolis, in 1879,

though they always merited the wider and more enduring audience which his death and this volume unite to give them.

It was notable, as 1879 and 1880 went on, how his writings gathered maturity and strength. I instance the poem on "Solitude," published August, 1880. Others appeared in other prints, some of them never yet seen by me, which is also true of the larger number left by him in manuscript only. This writing purports to give a mere fragmentary view of his works but my faith is implicit that a careful perusal of all these pages will call from the candid reader and lover of poetry a tribute of praise beside which my own shall seem tame indeed.

His was no reckless muse. Nature's generous gifts to him stopped short of sinful prodigality. His rare power of expression had not the sort of ease which would make it cheap. George Rankin could always find gold, but he dug for it; and he believed in getting it whether it lay in the placer or the rock. Only right words are the faithful servants of poetic thought; he believed in trained servants. I have known of his patient brooding over a word or a phrase that the gold he found might be refined gold; he fashioned his muse with the art instinct and conscience as ministering spirits to his divine gift. He observed, read, and at his age wrought to wonderful purpose. The boy of fifteen was familiar with Shakespeare, Longfellow, and other masters of the past and present. He had never had the drill of the text-book in grammar or rhetoric ; two years comprised all his school days. He was of a sedate turn ; in mixed social throngs he would be classed generally among the retiring ones, and by his associates, as peculiar. Truth was, he moved in a maze at the common small-talk of such gatherings ; but in the quieter home circle his companionship was most genial, his conversation receptive and stimulating. Sober, indeed, but this soberness the calm

hope of one who had early solved much of life's serious task and written Peace for the end thereof.

During the years of his writing he was a toiler with his hands for a livelihood, a compositor in Minneapolis printing offices. His versifying was in hours of leisure — if leisure ever comes to such souls. His devotion to "Mother" was of rare degree and beautiful ; the full fruit of its lavish return cannot be measured. For all the house he was an inspiration, in cheery presence, or sunny letters when absent. His verses afford a taste of his nature — his love of field, wood and stream at all seasons ; open-air activities were a delight, and we may run and read how bountifully he brought back sheaves for our mutual rejoicing.

A burning fever marked out his way to final rest just as the open door of legal manhood was reached. I read a lesson in this life which found an end in its beginning, like that in the story of the walk to Emmaus ; and to-day do not our hearts ache and burn within us with a precious sense of loss which those who loved and were loved by him may, if they will, make a divine presence with them always, even to the end of the world !

> O vanished friend, till now we had not known thee,
> So sightless man midst light that Heaven doth give, —
> Praise waits on tears ; thou'rt glorified and free,
> Who, dying, hast begun to live !

LUTHER OSBORN.

GLYNDON, Minn.

"Little Nell" was among the latest of his productions, and one over which he lingered lovingly. "Minnetonka" was the result of his only holiday trip over the waters of that beautiful lake. "My Father's House" records incidents connected with the work of the Young Men's Christian Association in this

city, in which he had become deeply interested. His longest poem, "Memories of Christmas," which has been published in pamphlet form, is (with a number of other pieces,) necessarily excluded from this volume.

In closing these constrained and imperfect references to the work and life of one so dear, I must be permitted for once to speak out more naturally, at least, while saying that Georgie *lived* the life of moral and literary elevation which his poems indicate. "St. Valentine" records his ideal of womanhood, — his reverence for God is manifest everywhere. In these two essentials of a healthy nature his "songs gushed from his heart;" and from the time when, as a boy on the knee, his voice rang out triumphantly while reading or repeating the swelling chorus, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in," until the end, he could not read what was low in character or expression. His daily conversation was governed by the same love of moral and artistic worth and beauty. To this testify his most intimate associates. And here I may properly as well as gratefully acknowledge that this book perhaps owes its existence to the very general and hearty support given to a doubtful enterprise by his fellow craftsmen — to whom and to others who have also greatly aided and encouraged me in this strange work, it is a privilege thus to acknowledge obligations.

On March 7th Georgie started homewards — unwell. While waiting for a friend, he wrote the fragment which occupies the last page of this volume. His illness was the beginning of a severe attack of typhoid fever. From the first the result was feared. He died March 22, 1882, twenty-one and a half years old. Loving life, and looking forward to one of usefulness and honor, he spoke often and cheerfully of his willingness to exchange life for life.

JAMES S. RANKIN.

Minneapolis, July 1882.

CONTENTS.

	Page.
The Sheaf	1
The Prophet's Appeal	2
The Prairie Fire	8
By the River in Winter	11
The Plough	15
Thanksgiving	18
The Stars	21
Courage in Death	22
A Winter Twilight	23
After a Sunset	25
The Old Year	26
One Song More	28
Solitude	32
The Wind's Song	35
The Loon	37
The Ploughman	40
The White Grave	43
The Scourge of the South	46
Angel of Mercy	51
Sonnet — A Good Life	54
Hamlet, Prince of Denmark	55
On Cruelty to Animals	57
Song of Courage	59
The Bird of Passage	62

The True Poet 66
The Wanderer's Song 70
The Unseen Harvest 73
The Falls 77
Dedication for a Scrap-Book 81
Love and Death 82
St. Valentine 83
The Last Hour 86
Baby Bessie 89
A Prayer 91
The Snow Fall 93
Sonnet — The Moon's Eclipse 94
Carlyle 95
To a Young Man 99
The Mills — A Fancy 101
Victory in Death 104
Fame 105
The Sabbath 107
The Fatal Search 109
Unwritten Poetry 110
The Dying Actor 113
Defeated 116
Flowers From the Battle-Field 119
The Message of the Lily 122
Consolation 123
The Cynic's Reverie 126
Innocence 130
Rupert Almayne 132
"His Soul is Marching On" 135
Lines 140
Awe 144
Garfield 147
Through the Gate 149

Under the Moon 154
In Memoriam 157
Minnetonka 161
My Father's House 169
The Sacred Chamber 175
Little Nell in the Church-Tower 179
Christ's Companionship 182
Sonnet — Patience 184
Tributes to Friendship 185
Last Words — A Fragment 192

"Read from some humble poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start.

"Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies."

—LONGFELLOW.

THE SHEAF.

Bind up the sheaf
  Of the bearded gold;
Soon falls the leaf,
  And the air grows cold;
And Winter comes and will wait for none
That sweat with toil in the Autumn sun.

Bind up the sheaf
  Of thy ripened mind
Ere the frost of grief
  Has left behind,
Ruined and reft, in the fields of the past,
The deeds thou hadst purposed to do at last.

Bind up the sheaf
  Of thy gathered thought;
Thy time is brief,
  And thy life is naught
If ne'er a sheaf of the treasured grain
Shall prove thy life not used in vain.

THE PROPHET'S APPEAL.

In the shadow of the Forest,
In the dusky realm of evening,
When the night's approaching footsteps
Passed along the dim horizon;
When the sighing of the West-Wind
Stirred the leaves of oak and maple
Like the passing of a garment;
When the massive oak-trees whispered
In soft music through the solemn
Dimness of the noble landscape;
Through the pathways of the Forest,
Silent as the stars above him,
Came the prophet, Waukanoga,
He, the seer of all his people;
And behind him, dark and noiseless,
Followed bands of stern-faced warriors.
Scarce you would have known their coming,
Had you stood beside the pathway,

And the rabbit might have listened,
All in vain, to catch the footfall
Of the warriors in the darkness.

Through the woodland's hollow silence
Passed the prophet, like a shadow,
Like a stealthy phantom gliding
Through the depths of utter stillness,
Utter gloom, and only broken
By the murmur of the West-Wind,
And a struggling thread of moonlight.

On the borders of the Forest
Paused the seer, and looking Westward,
Saw the Moon, the Queen of Darkness,
Rising in the paths of Midnight;
Saw the shimmering starlight falling,
Like a tender benediction,
On the bosom of the prairie;
Saw the circling hosts of Nature
Glitt'ring in the blue profoundness.

Then his heart was moved with passion,
And his mind was stirred with visions;

For the vast abyss of Nature
Lifted up his soul to greatness,
Caused his mind to gather fullness,
And his tongue to utter wisdom.

By his side the awe-struck warriors
Marked the gath'ring inspiration,
Marked the fire that lit his visage,
Saw his passion and his longing
For the infinite of Nature.
By his side they stood and waited,
More like statues than like humans,
For the bursting of the thunder
From the lips of the old prophet.

"Oh, my brothers," spoke the prophet,
"Oh, my warriors, oaken-hearted,
Men in peace and men in battle,
Strong to brave the toils of ambush,
Shaped for great and long endurance;
It is not through secret ambush,
Nor the hardihood of valor,
Nor the strength of burning torture,
That the Earth shall be made purer.

It is not through warring counsels,
It is not through deeds of bloodshed,
Nor in acts of direful vengeance,
That the Earth shall be made fairer.
It is not through war unceasing,
Bitter, vengeful, full of evil,
That men's hearts shall grow to fullness.

"Do ye love the voiceful forests?
Hear them whisper, low and solemn,
'Peace be with you, oh, my brothers!'
Do ye love the cooling West-Wind?
Hear it sighing through the branches,
'Peace be with you, oh, my brothers!'
Do ye love great Nature's children?
Love the voices of the forest?
Ye can hear them, singing, throbbing,
Till their songs are full of meaning,
'Peace be with you, oh, my brothers!'
Do ye love the mighty rivers,
Leaping o'er your precipices,
Like a bounding deer, exultant,
Flowing smoothly through your valleys,
Greenly clad and girt with flowers,

Mirroring the face of Heaven,
In the starry hours of Midnight;
Glowing crimson in the sunset,
When the fiery track of Daylight
Hides the Sun in flaming glory?
Ye can hear their wavelets rippling
Softly through the quiet valleys;
Hear them thunder in the chasms,
'Peace be with you, oh, my brothers!'

"Thus the myriad tongues of Nature
Speak of peace and of forgiveness,
Speak of brotherhood and manhood,
And the nobleness of friendship.

"From the grandest seat of Nature
Manito the mighty speaketh,
He, the Maker and the Father:
'Peace be with you, oh, my children!
Take the gifts that nature gives you,
All her boundless wealth of harvests;
Follow not the paths of hatred,
Hearken not to old traditions
Of another generation,

And the wrongs your fathers suffered.
For the earth must needs grow better;
Men must live and grow together,
Loving, bearing with each other,
Till the destiny of mortals
Reaches to a full completion.'

"Will ye stand upon the margin
Of the terrible eternal
With the blood of men upon you?
Will ye grovel in the shallow
Mire of hate and vengeful passion,
While the white, grand heart of Nature
Breathes its love and peace around you?
Ye, whose souls should be made nobler
By the pureness of her presence;
Ye, whose brows should be uplifted
Equal unto hers in stature,
Will ye be the darkest shadow
In the sunlight of her being?"

Ceased the prophet, and the warriors
Stood like statues carved in darkness,
Staring out into the moonlight;
Stood like monuments of silence,
At the doorway of the forest.

THE PRAIRIE FIRE.

A lithe form rested on its bended knee
In the wind-shaken grass, that, like a sea,
Surged in long undulations, far and near,
A waving ocean, brown and dead and sere.
The shadows filled the air, and, far away,
A line of fire on the horizon lay.
With silent awe I watched the pliant grass
Yield, that the footsteps of the wind might pass;
Then turned my eyes toward the stooping form
That held the germ of a terrific storm.
I saw the sparkle of a tiny light
Break out against the shadowy face of night;
The ready grass caught up the struggling flame,
A warning sound, as bursting billows, came;
The air grew hot, and with a crackling roar,
Like breakers hurled upon a rocky shore,
The fire rushed on, a broad and glowing sheet,
And left a blackened ruin at my feet!

As some fierce, baleful fiend, the burning mass
Reached out hot arms to seize the trembling grass,
That withered in its suffocating breath,
And flung black cinders in the air of death.
Toward the lighted sky the dragon flung
The curling points of many a blood-red tongue,
And sweeping on in wild, tumultuous wrath
It left behind a smoky, lurid path!
Ah, could the almost winged Arabian steed
Lead that tornado in its fiery speed?
Could human power, pursued by such a foe,
Escape that seething furnace's scorching glow?
Doubtful, methinks, were such a fearful race,
Where Nature's maddest demon holds the chase!
For, with relentless, savage fury, sweep
The waves of fire through grassy oceans deep;
And, as the gale sweeps chaff from winnowed grain,
Vanish the grasses on the fire-swept plain.
Now fainter grows the roar, until it seems
But the deep murmuring of distant streams;
The leaping brightness hastens from my sight,
And leaves to me the fitful gleams of light,
That, here and there, leap up with pleasant sound,
And cast a glimmer on the air around!

Like a burnt city seemed the blazing plain
Against the sky that frowned with threats of rain,
As, with reluctant heart, I turned my feet
To seek the far off city's grassless street,
Averse to leave the large, mysterious stage
Where Nature doth enact her scenes from age to age.

BY THE RIVER IN WINTER.

The river flows through gray, dismantled woods
That seem like ruined halls, whose pillars stand
Unroofed, sad tokens of the past, strewn 'round
With broken cornices and sculptured leaves
And rifted heaps of marble, which the sun
Sprinkles with diamonds; there the argent moon
At midnight makes the frosty branches gleam
With the sparkling sheen, and the small-seeming stars
Unite with her their distant rays to make
A ghostly splendor in the lonely wood.
The mournful winds breathe a perpetual sigh
Through all its desolate chambers, and the trees
Sob with low voices through the feeble light,
As though they mourned the year's voluptuous prime,
When every skeleton limb was richly draped
In Summer's green, luxurious foliage,
And the high arches of the drooping vine
Hung o'er the river's warm and open tide.

No more we hear thy thundering monotone
Call through the land from morning till the night,
And from the night till morning; thou art dumb,
O River, and thy voice is hushed to us,
But murmurs underneath the solid ice—
A crystal dungeon—as a prisoner sings,
Hoping deliv'rance. Thy companions all—
The cunning beaver, he who fells the trees
Upon thy banks to build his winter home;
The mink, the otter and the muskrat—prowl
Beneath thy frozen breast. The rabbit's track
Imprints the crackling snow, as with swift feet
He flies along the forest's marble floor
And threads the labyrinth of the hazel-brush,
Like some white ghost that haunts a ruined home.

The merciless winds scourge the unsheltered plain
With howling blasts, whose maniacal shrieks
And sobs and whispers drive the shivering soul
To the congenial welcome of the hearth
To dream of spring. Yet Winter, too, is fair,
For soon his madness wanes, and leaves to us
The dazzling snow, the radiant atmosphere,
An amethystine sea, wherein is felt

Reviving health, that makes the pulse of life
Beat with new ardor. I remember me
Of winter suns that made the level ice
Glitter with brilliant prisms, as our feet,
Steel-clad and restless, spurned the slipp'ry floor
With curving stroke. A million diamonds burst
From bending willows, as our fingers touched
Their laden branches, and the hazel-brush
Let fall a silver spray that scattered o'er
The shining ice. The woods were crystalline,
For every withered leaf and fern and blade,
And every twig and branch and rugged bough
Was laced with frost and set around with gems
That took all colors from the shifting light.

'Twas Winter in his mildest, happiest mood,
Who sat with awe in those transfigured aisles
Of Nature's solemn temple, hung around
With jeweled folds of samite drapery!
Nor spring nor summer nor the autumn's flush
Could equal this! No languid loveliness
That with soft luxury invites to sloth
The easy flesh and the enchanted mind,
But fresh, inspiring beauty, such as sends

The leaping blood exultant on its course
With fervid rapture, and that fills the mind
With high enthusiasm of noble thoughts
And a diviner yearning. He who stands
In Nature's presence, while her lustrous eyes
Smile in his own, and feels no passion-thrill
Stir in the sluggish recess of his breast,
He is not worthy of the stamp she set
On his degraded forehead.—Bow thy head,
And breathe amid this sinless solitude
One honest prayer to purify thy creed,
And shed a benediction o'er thy life!

THE PLOUGH.

Thou uncouth sceptre of the clown,
The finger of a just renown
Shall write more honest glory down
Upon thy share
Than glitters on the costliest crown
That monarchs wear.

There's blood upon the purest stone
Whose dazzling lustre ever shone
Above the grandeur of the throne,
But thou hast stood
Upon the kingly right alone
Of doing good.

The world—the world—is in thy train!
Thine empire is the fruitful plain,
Thine armies, stately hosts of grain,

That soon will rise
Magnificent o'er thy domain,
'Neath summer skies.

Methinks that many millions wait
For thee to ope the golden gate
Where nature, opulently great,
Dispenses free
The largess of her broad estate
From sea to sea.

What though the snow-hung forests weep
With icy tears that melt and creep
Athwart their dreary winter sleep
In chilly rain,
And pallid silence, cold and deep,
Wraps hill and plain—

The angel Resurrection broods
Above the lifeless solitudes,
And spite of winter's angry moods,
Still smiling dreams
Of emerald prairies, billowy woods
And dashing streams.

The vital, spiritual power
Whose gracious mission is to shower
On mountain pine and timid flower
A lovely birth
Reserves for thee the richest dower
She has on earth.

God made a beauty even in toil,
A music in the year's turmoil,
A splendor in the harvest's spoil,
And, let us feel,
He stamps upon the very soil
His awful seal.

So thou whose lot is cast to plod
Along the furrows of the sod,
Mayst feel the pathway thou hast trod
A royal one,
And that all labor true to God
No man need shun.

THANKSGIVING.

The sheaves lie thick on Autumn's field,
And shine like heaps of scattered gold—
The wealth that Nature first revealed
To toiling man of old.

The rising sun, with flashing blade,
Has reaped his fading plains on high,
And on fair Morning's altar laid
The harvest of the sky.

The clouds are fringed with brilliant dyes,
The dew lies glistening in the sun,
The boundaries of the earth and skies
With light seem overrun.

The rapturous carols of the morn
That fill the healthful atmosphere,
The rustle of the stately corn
Nodding and beckoning near—

The melody and loveliness
Of Autumn's gay, prophetic prime—
All these have left their fresh impress,
A dream for winter-time!

I wonder if yon rugged clown,
Who dozes by his blazing hearth,
Dreams of the Autumn's ripened prime,
And thanks the generous earth.

I wonder if the sounds he heard
All day among his falling sheaves—
The cooling breeze, the song of bird,
The murmur of the leaves;

I wonder if the strange romance
Of Nature—every stalk she rears—
The hidden wheel of circumstance
That moves the fruitful years,

E'er drew him, in some happy hour,
To see a greater good than gain
In all the gifts that God doth shower
On Nature's rich domain.

Or thinks he, when his fastened bands
Fall down amongst the prostrate grain,
How oft the work of human hands
Is done by power of brain?

And how the progress of the mind,
The triumph of inventive skill,
Leaves labor's heavy cares behind,
And wanders where it will.

* * * * *

The storm that sweeps around thy door
And shrieks in varied, sudden blast,
Is weak to that thy fathers bore
To build an honest Past.

The great achievements of their race,
The fruit of energy divine,
The height of Power's commanding place—
Their treasures all are thine.

Thank God for their recorded days,
Though ours are blotted o'er with crime,
And add thy tribute to their praise
Who wrought for future time.

Wear thou the crown they ever wore,
Virtue and love—perhaps austere,
But brighter, like their burnished floor,
Because 'twas held so dear.

THE STARS.

How tranquilly the legions of the stars,
On Heaven's blue slopes assembled far and near,
Gaze on the face of this unquiet sphere,
Whose lab'ring breast, still chafed by ancient scars,
Sighs with the pain of Man's perpetual wars!
How softly brilliant, how serenely clear,
They meet the eyes whose vision falters here—
Their steadfast smile no gloom, no shadow mars!
Oh, could the earth send back as pure a ray
To greet yon hosts that throng the plains of night!
But she sweeps onward o'er her dusky way,
Like some lost wanderer, banished from the light,
Who sees, where'er her farthest footsteps stray,
Celestial faces shine from height to height.

COURAGE IN DEATH.

Pity that man who struggles with his fate,
For he has lost the ennobling hopes that spring
From resignation's patient suffering—
That mood which renders greatness doubly great,
Exalts humility to high estate,
And mingles with the cup life's fortunes bring
The antidote which deadens all its sting,
And turns to sweetness even the dregs of hate.
Pity the wretch ! for he's indeed alone
Whose courage leaves him crouched with abject head,
While mocking death cuts short the trembling moan
With the cold poison of despair and dread,
And spurns the clod he well may call his own,
Since its best portion was already dead.

A WINTER TWILIGHT.

The world's in its shroud, and the gray forests stand
  Like white-bearded mourners, all tremblingly sighing,
  And the moan of the wind, like a wail for the dying,
Sweeps out on the breath of the snow-mantled land.

The twilight is chilly and ghostly and drear,
  Like a visible presence of desolate sadness
  That broods where of late sang the spirit of gladness,
And summer's rich crown decked the brow of the year.

Like a palace deserted and stripped of its pride,
  Its hearthstone disdained by the foot of the stranger,
  While the hearts that once loved it in peace and in danger
From their birthplace are scattered by time or by tide,—

So the bleak forests seem, of their glory laid bare;
  Their children have vanished, their singers departed,
  The voices that once were so sweet and light-hearted
Have left not an echo to soften the air.

Every twig, as it crackles and breaks 'neath my tread,
Seems to mock retrospection and sharply awaken
Thoughts akin to a scene so despoiled and forsaken,
And to startle old voices that speak of the dead.

But yet, oh, ye forests, your sorrow is brief:
There's a season for laughter as well as for weeping;
Your children will rise from the graves where they're sleeping,
And your singers return with the bud of the leaf.

The shadow of death whose dark presence is blent
With the gloom of the evening's indefinite spaces
Is the angel of mercy whose pity embraces
All life that by Heaven for man's pleasure was sent.

The angel of life lays her head on his breast,
To sleep for a time, and the flowers in her tresses
Are withered and crushed by the hand that caresses
The beautiful sleeper, serenely at rest.

But oh, when she rises in lovely array,
Our hearts will forget that she ever grew weary
And sank to her rest in a refuge so dreary
To wait for the dawn of the happier day !

AFTER A SUNSET.

Thus sinks the life of Genius to its end—
A moment blazoned on the sky of time
In hues of splendor transiently sublime,
Where all the colors truth and fancy lend
In a divine transfiguration blend;
The morning's glow, the noon's effulgent prime,
And the bright evening of a genial clime,
Merged in one glory, like a dream descend.
But memory's orb, like that undazzling sphere
Which hallows night with pure, reflected rays,
Sheds on the name of him whom we revere
The tempered light of more discerning praise,
And breathes a solemn, holy atmosphere
About the silence of our loneliest ways.

THE OLD YEAR.

A form sits musing in the dark,
Watching the fire's exultant spark,
And hearing in its murmuring glow
The voices of the long-ago.

The record of departed days
Is flashing from the genial blaze;
The shadows of remembered names
Flit through the rosy bed of flames.

E'en now, perhaps, their distant souls
Are dreaming in the living coals,
Whose sympathetic power extends
The chord of thought 'twixt parted friends—

The chord of love, whereon we play
The measures of another day,

Half-fearing, lest the mournful song
Should bear some note of sin and wrong.

Who, though immersed in crime and folly,
Could e'er resist such melancholy ?
The touch of time's retreating wings
Will rouse his soul to better things !

The music of the welcoming spheres
That ushers in the hastening years,
Sings hope to him who claims his throne,
But grief to him who leaves his own.

The year is going ! oh, my friend,
May thy years have a joyous end,
But one regret will tinge them all—
Their evil none can e'er recall.

ONE SONG MORE.

One song more, dear lady,
  One song more, I pray;
For you fill my soul with echoes
  That never will die away.

On his western couch of roses
  The pale day slowly dies,
And the valleys are misty with sunlight
  That shines from his fading eyes.

Sing me a song for his dying,
  And a song for the mourning night,
Who casts the pall of her shadows
  Over his eyes of light.

Sing me a song for the twilight,
  The twilight grand and dim,
Who croons to the dreamy landscape
  Creation's vesper hymn.

The stars encircle his forehead,
And beneath him the gray world rolls
With its discord of weeping and laughter,
The burdens of restless souls.

And the wings of my thoughts rush o'er me
Like the passage of homeward birds,
And a passion too deep for music
Or the rhythm of measured words

Throbs in my brain like the heart-beat
Of a spirit so eager and strong
I would drown the thirst of my yearning
In the nectar that fills your song.

Then sing me another measure,
The rare, sweet voice I crave
Might call a soul from the darkness
That reaches beyond the grave.

'Tis not the touch of your fingers,
Wand'ring from key to key,
Nor the flow of your silken tresses
That wakens this thought in me.

'Tis not the fashion of nature
That lives in figure or face—
For that is gross in its beauty,
But this is divine in its grace.

Oh, is it you that are singing,
Or some seraph that stealeth down
With a song from the fields of Heaven,
Veiled in a mantle of brown ?

Or is it your spirit immortal
That flutters its wings in your breast,
Like a bird that pours from its prison
The song of its own unrest ?

Ah, the bird is free from its thralldom,
And bursts away on its flight
And the throb of its pinions exultant
Floats back on the listening night.

Nearer the gates of Heaven !—
Across the gulfs of the dark
The music grows fainter and sweeter,
Like the voice of a mounting lark,

When we stand and listen and wonder
  That so feeble an animate clod
Can voice such a rapture of passion
  So near to the glory of God.

Nearer the gates of Heaven !—
  Nearer—to fail ere long,
And sink down the spaces of twilight
  On the tremulous chords of the song.

Weary, but tender and plaintive,
  It falters with outstretched wings,
Then nestles down into silence
  From its Heavenward wanderings.

The bird is hushed into stillness,
  But the seraph still sits in the gloom,
Dreaming, perhaps, that Heaven
  Will shine through the quiet room.

And, lo, the weird sheen of the moonlight
  Creeps through the guardian trees,
And drops its mysterious fingers,
  Like a blessing, upon the keys.

SOLITUDE.

The dews lie couched among the prairie flowers,
The wind is soft and gentle in its mood.
Let us go forth; this balmy solitude,
Crowned with the halo of the twilight hours,
Doth seem to stretch its dusky arms to us
With a mute passion on its shadowy face.
There are no memories here, of time or place,
To mar our contemplation; it is thus
That Nature hallowed the barbarian past,
And thus her presence awes us to the last.

Save where the pheasant, startled from its nest,
Whirs through the air, and fades against the sky,
Or some wild loon upon the water's breast
Utters its strange and melancholy cry,
There is no sound. The stars themselves do seem
Intense with silence; there's some spirit here

That doth oppress the fancy like a dream —
A fancied music, heard and yet not heard —
Or like sad eyes, that speak without a word.

Methinks there is an eloquence unborn,
Music divine, and thoughts to stir mankind,
That haunt these wilds, but at the touch of morn
They flee away, like shadows, from the mind.
Oh, here Imagination has her throne,
Circled by stars; her glorious eyes diffuse
Mysterious thoughts that turn us from our own,
And bid us pause to wonder and to muse.
We do not know the power that we revere,
But worship blindly, feeling that Heaven is near.

Dost thou love nature? 'Tis her hour of prayer.
From every recess underneath the dome
Some breath steals upward through the solemn air,
Freighted with worship, till it finds a home.
The very grass that stirs beneath our feet
Doth struggle upward to the feet of God,
And every flower that makes our pathway sweet
Doth voice a prayer of nature from the sod.
The zephyr chants; the forest's distant sigh
Gives back the whisper of its awed reply.

Would it seem strange if this abyss profound,
Yon orbs of glory and this slumbering sphere,
Should swell the stress of spiritual sound
Across the gulfs of silence to our ear?
No, 'twere not strange; the stillness is so deep
That it doth seem as if an angel bent
To hearken the divine command to sweep
The chords of nature's mighty instrument,
And wake the throb of those majestic bars
That beat the rhythm of the morning stars.

Sometimes methinks the seraph's fingers sway
The powerful chords; celestial measures flow
From star to star, and, ere they die away,
An echo wanders to our star below.
Such are these yearnings — this undying sense
Of the Immortal — echoes of the song
That angels sing before Omnipotence,
And, true as Heaven, they never lead us wrong.
'Tis we ourselves that lead ourselves astray,
While conscience looks to God and points the way.

THE WIND'S SONG.

The wind is blowing across the wheat,
  That bows with an endless sigh;
Like the rush of a thousand unseen feet
  The winged air hurries by,
    And it bears a song
    That is low and long —
"All things must perish beneath the sky."

'Tis the same old soil, and the selfsame plough,
  But the harvest is not the same;
The field will be shorn that is glorious now
  With splendor the reaper must claim;
    The seed and its crown
    Must all go down
To the fruitful darkness from which they came.

Down to the earth, where the reaper is laid,
  With his scythe deep buried in rust;

Where human harvests have long decayed
And nations are mingled in dust;
Where Time bestows
His blisses and woes,
In the hands of Death—for Death is just.

"Seed and harvest—harvest and seed"—
This was the chord of the song—
"The grain must fall with the choking weed,
The weak descend with the strong!
For he who reaps
Neither slumbers nor sleeps,
And the time ere the harvest is never long."

THE LOON.

When the shadows encompass the lake
And the light of the drifting moon
Shines down through the clouds as they break
On the topmost summit of noon,
Then I hear the cry of the loon —
A wild monotonous cry,
Floating up to the sky,
Where the broken moonbeams glow
O'er the cavernous rifts of the clouds,
Like ghosts that arise in their shrouds,
And gaze on the dark below.

Afar on the wrinkled breast
Of the tossing and dark expanse
The loon is lying at rest,
While the waters around him dance,
And he rocks with an eagle glance
Swift as the rifle's crack

That speeds the ball on its track.
Against the glimmering white
Of the waves as they rise and fall,
Dimly — and that is all —
His proud form breaks on my sight.

But his mournful and long halloo,
That startles the sheltering dark,
Bethinks me of one whom I knew
Who bore Cain's murderous mark.
Long years ago he returned
To the home where his hearth-fires burned,
A fugitive branded with crime;
And he prayed by these waters for peace,
And sought by their stillness release
From the pitiless mockings of Time!

But ever the cry of the loon
Rang strange and mad in his ears
Like a curse on his prayer-sought boon,
Like a wailing out of the years!
And when the angry spheres
Were hid from his fevered view,
The loon's unearthly halloo,

Like the cry of one calling in vain,
Smote on his soul like lead,
And brought to his sleepless bed
Old spectres to madden his brain.

So, maddening slowly, he walked
With a tottering tread on the shore,
And ever beside him stalked
The ghosts of the years before,
While the loon's wild chorus bore
The awful burden of crime,
A sad funereal chime,
To the hoarse lament of remorse;
And there, on a sunny day,
Where in boyhood he loved to play,
They found him, a dripping corse!

THE PLOUGHMAN.

The plough is sheathed in the cloven sod
At the edge of an upheaved sea of loam;
The prairie sleeps with a languid nod,
The wild fowl call from their journey home;
And, sinking slow
To the fields below,
They stalk like sentinels to and fro.

But the ploughman bends to his violin
On the threshold grass at his moonlit door,
While the spirit, music, flits out and in,
As the master wand glides softly o'er
The fragile cell
Where she comes to dwell
At the talisman touch she knows so well.

The partridge slips through the sheltering grass,
And stealthily lifts its neck to hear;

The bittern stares from the rank morass,
And the hare leaps up with a wakeful ear;
The wolf looks away
From the scent of his prey,
And listens a moment as if at bay.

But the player sits in the humble spot
At the feet of the silence roofed o'er by stars;
The night is lonely, but he is not,
For a world breathes out from the quivering bars,
And every sound
Is hallowed and crowned
By the peopled heart of the bright profound.

Who scorns this man for his rugged task?
A human soul is a monarch's peer,
And vainly power might stoop to ask
For the peace and the glory that mingle here.
Pleasure's the meed
Of an honest deed
And only springs from its natural seed.

When the sceptre falls from the monarch's hand,
And the ploughman quits his rusting share;

When both go down at the same command,
To earth's last kingdom, and slumber there,
Then we may know
How great or low
Is the spirit unmasked of mortal show.

Oh, ploughman, sitting so far alone,
Circled by endless wilds of space,
Thy bow is a sceptre, thy seat a throne,
And thou a king with a kingly grace;
For, after all,
The master and thrall
Within themselves survive or fall.

THE WHITE GRAVE.

"Fierce howls the storm's increasing blast
Along the frozen plains of white;
The drifting snow is whirled and cast
Full in the groaning face of night.

"Scarce can yon glimmering woods be seen
Betwixt the columns of the snow;
Lone wandering here when woods are green,
Your reckless feet astray might go.

"But hard it is for men to bear
The scourge of Winter, furious king,
And feel the poniard of the air
Pierce the pale flesh with quiv'ring sting!"

He turned — the glow was on his cheek
That ripens in our Northern air —
"I do not fear the storm-wind's shriek,"
He laughed to those who warned him there.

He plunged into the outer world,
With pleasant fire-side memories warm;—
The sheeted snow around him whirled
The ghostly garments of the storm!

The moon let fall a frozen ray
That chilled him with its icy breath,
And led him on his shifting way
To meet the spectral face of Death.

The merciless winds against him beat
With hollow groans and shivering sighs,
Until his snow-bewildered feet
Seemed driven by the reeling skies.

And then he felt across his life
A sharp and bitter anguish come—
Like the slow drawing of a knife—
His face grew white, his limbs grew numb!

He turned with tottering steps to seek
The shelter of a roof once more—
But the hoarse wind's demoniac shriek
Laughed him to scorn with fitful roar.

Some spirit on the mad wind laughed
Above him as he tottered slow,
Whose hand let fall a stinging shaft
That laid the trembling wanderer low.

And now what lethargy of sleep
Through all his helpless being went?
What dreamy thoughts would o'er him creep,—
What far-off memories round him bent?

What shadowy visions, hopes and fears,
Confused his deathly slumber then?—
What broken purposes of years,
And voices of his fellow-men?

We know not—but the storm-wind swept,
With mournful whispers, dull and low,
And heaped above him where he slept
A marble monument of snow.

And there, when Spring had calmed the sky,
Around him tramped the wondering herds,
While caroled as in days gone by
The liquid warblings of the birds.

THE SCOURGE OF THE SOUTH.

A voice from the wasted South !
A cry from destruction's mouth !
And from a ghastly drouth
    Of human existence.
Sits she all desolate,
For, from Death's yawning gate,
Rolled the simoon of fate,
    Mocking resistance !

Bright smiled Youth's dancing eye
To the responsive sky;
Womanhood, bending nigh,
    Thrilled him with passion !
Manhood, with lofty head,
Age, with his feeble tread,
Girlhood, with locks wide spread
    In Nature's sweet fashion —

These Death regarded not;
Naught was a holy spot;
Palace nor simple cot
Lured him to pity !
But, with exultant yell,
Straight from the depths of hell,
With his black legions, fell
On the gay city !

He had no mercy then,
But, from his poisonous fen,
Breathed his hot breath on men —
A dread exhalation !
Not the wild mother's prayer,
Moaned in her crushed despair,
Moved the stern fiend forbear
His mad desecration !

Light foot and dancing eye,
Lips that ne'er breathed a sigh,
All in the dust they lie,
Doomed without warning !
Weep for both youth and age,
Weep for the stricken sage,

Weep, for Death casts the gage,
Hurls it with scorning !

Grim on Wealth's perfumed show,
And on the haunts of Woe,
Frowned the impartial foe,
Frowned with harsh laughter.
" Gemmed hand and wrinkled brow,
Ye are both equal now !
In my still halls below
Rest ye hereafter !"

Forth from the pleasant hearth,
Down to the cells of earth,
Dear love and manly worth
Went with blind weeping.
Over the threshold stone
Went the last living one
Out in the world alone,
Far from their sleeping.

" Aid ! oh, my brothers, aid ! "
So the pale Southland prayed,
" Horror's increasing shade

Broods o'er my nation !
Stretch forth your hands, I pray,
Bring us health's balmy ray,
Drive from the frightened day
Dark desolation.

" Hear ye my children weep,
As the night-watch they keep
Where demon-shadows creep
With beck'ning finger ?
Day is like fearful night
Unto their darkened sight,
Smitten in gloom and light !
Death will not linger."

Hail to the Northern land !
She hath stretched forth her hand;
She the divine command
Hears not unmoving.
Smitten with foul disease
Her noble sons she sees!
Little Death cared for these,
Steadfast and loving.

Heroes were they who died
By the doomed wretch's side,
In the dim halls of pride,
Or with the lowly.
Greater praise none can crave
Than that his life he gave,
Others to reach and save—
Such death is holy.

ANGEL OF MERCY.

TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO GAVE THEMSELVES TO SAVE THE YELLOW FEVER SUFFERERS.

Oh, Death, thou dread and stealthy foe
Of all the hapless human race,
What heroes sprang to thy embrace
In bitter wars of long ago!

What martyrs left the gliding plow
And fell beneath thine iron touch!
Oh, earth has many more of such
To hallow life with glory now!

Not they alone whose cold blades rung
Stern chorus to their martial strains,
Should bear the palm that courage gains,
And live in pæans fame has sung.

Reveal, oh, Death, what fearless souls
Have braved thee in the Southern land,
And, followed by thy secret hand,
Have trod the fever's deadly coals;

Within the shadow of the tomb
What faces glow with halo light!
What buds that terror could not blight
Have burst into a sudden bloom!

Oh, saintly women, ye who bend
Above the dying sufferer's bed,
With soothing touch and silent tread
And patience steadfast to the end,

We little know what lingering trace
Of Heaven this sensual world conceals
Till dark affliction's hand reveals
The kindred feelings of the race.

Ye teach us, what we oft forget,
That sympathy's electric wire
Can bear the heart's magnetic fire
To warm the blood of nations yet.

Though we are only dust and shade,
  Yet there is still a spark divine
  To blossom into flame and shine
Above the ruins we have made —

A light to show us what we are,
  And what our brothers are to us,
  And give a sweeter meaning thus
To what were else but soulless jar.

Oh, heroines of a later time,
  We, knowing what your hands have done,
  Would lift our voices up as one
In praise of what we hold sublime.

Oh, braver men than they who dip
  Their swords into a foeman's blood,
  To clasp your hands in brotherhood,
Were a divine companionship.

SONNET — A GOOD LIFE.

As one who seeks a hushed and pleasant room,
Weary of multitudinous cares that fret
To-morrow's promise with to-day's regret,
And feels the mingled souls of flowers in bloom
Comfort his senses with a vague perfume,
So in the chamber of a life where yet
Heaven's beauty glows unwithered, we forget
The outer world's severity and gloom.
Such lives are types of Paradise; we see
In them the possibilities of earth,
And the assurance of a time to be,
When every spirit, measured by the worth
Of its existence, shall in that degree
Achieve the glory of celestial birth.

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.

Oh, strange and melancholy form
  Haunting the imaginative sphere
Wherein half-human phantasms swarm,
  Like ghosts of thoughts that wander here,
What art thou but the very twin
  And shadow of our saddest part,
A picture of the doubt and sin
  And madness of the earthly heart?

As if thou wert of kindred flesh,
  Thine every mood interprets ours,
And all our actions prove afresh
  Thy darkly philosophic powers;
Thou hast a lodge in every mind
  Where flits the intellectual throng
Whose omnipresent footsteps find
  An entrance by the poet's song.

If thou wert mad, all men are so
Who deem this life of little worth;
The gloom that crowned thee long ago
Is not yet lifted from the earth;
Still hypocrites will mask deceit,
Still love is but a secret pain,
And fools, for some delusive sweet,
Will dare an everlasting pain.

The puzzle vast and complicate
Which ravels all the world's affairs,
The maze of love and pride and hate,
The conflict of beleaguering cares,
All are unsolved as much as when
Thou hadst been wont to brood them o'er
Wand'ring apart from gayer men
Among the halls of Elsinore.

ON CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

He is no Christian in his deeds
  Who slays in wantonness of power
The weakest life whose tiny needs
  Betray it in a fatal hour;
Who blots from time the humblest share
  Of that abundant life which throngs
The free domains of earth and air,
  But has no voice to plead its wrongs.

Oh, ye who scornfully regard
  A helpless creature's dumb appeal,
Were not your fate unjustly hard
  If that great power to whom ye kneel
Should spurn your sorrow when ye pray,
  And thrust you from the world, to be
A jest for fiends—to drift away,
  A wreck upon Oblivion's sea?

Has God created life for naught,
That ye should trample under foot
The seal of his creative thought,
Stamped on the lowliest, feeblest brute?
When ye remember what ye are,
How low in the Immortal eyes,
No creature on this sinful star
Seems meet for mortals to despise.

No! by that mercy which delays
To judge your folly or your vice —
By that one star whose gracious rays
Still point you back to Paradise —
Be merciful; stoop not to break
The cup of life, however frail,
Lest every ruin that you make
Should cause in you some good to fail.

SONG OF COURAGE.

Few are the souls that never feel
Their baffled courage faint and reel,
Dragged by an iron weight of care,
And sickened with a keen despair!

Few are the souls that never bend
  Above the bier of pallid Hope,
Deeming that hence all strife must end,
  And blind ambition cease to grope.

O'ermastered by its cankering woe,
That soul sinks tremblingly and low,
Content, upon Oblivion's shore,
To rest — to sleep — to be no more.

Oh, shall that prostrate spirit rise,
  Awakened from its piteous trance,
To look in Disappointment's eyes,
  And meet the world's unfriendly glance?

Ay, fallen spirit, lift thy head —
Hope does but sleep; she is not dead;
For, 'neath her wearied lashes lies
The magic brightness of her eyes!

Arise! wilt thou be overthrown,
And leave thy purpose unfulfilled,
Like one who leaves a base of stone
Where some great dome he meant to build?

There is no depth where thou canst flee
But thy regret will follow thee,
And round thy barren pathway cast
The taunting shadows of the past.

Oh, do not think on what thou art,
But what thou canst be, if thou wilt!
The boldest has an anxious heart,
But cowardice is kin to guilt.

Dim not with tears the rays that fire
The golden crown of thy desire;
Like quenchless beacons still they shine
From jewels that may yet be thine.

Thy friends may pity, foes may sneer,
But heed them not; if thou prevail,
The voice of praise will woo thine ear,
But few will reck, if thou shouldst fail.

Thyself must win, thyself must wear,
The gems of wealth, or thorns of care;
Thyself must drink the dregs of shame,
Or quaff the precious wine of fame.

Oh, while thou hast the vital breath
That shields thee from the thrust of Death,
To none but these thy victory owe:
Thy God above, thyself below!

THE BIRD OF PASSAGE.

All day have thy long pinions beat
  The illimitable seas of light;
  All day, from that aerial height
Thine eyes have scanned the fields of wheat
  That gleam beneath thy homeward flight.

Sometimes thy watchful eyes have seen
  Cities where many a lessened spire
  Shines like a point of diamond fire
To mark the leagues that lie between
  Thee and the land of thy desire.

The sunrise pales across thy track,
  And fades into the noon-day glare;
  The sunset fires suffuse the air,
And night's long draperies of black
  Fold in the distance everywhere.

Now mayst thou rest, descending low
  Among the slender reeds that shake
  Along the margin of the lake,
Fretted by vagrant winds that blow
  Their idle whispers through the brake.

Oh, Fancy's wings are strong as thine!
  With thee she flies, she rests with thee,
  And waits beside the lake to see
The tardy moon arise and shine
  Across the wide, unsheltered lea.

The silver circlet on her brow
  Lights the dark-curtained halls of space,
  And drives the shades from place to place,
While the dim hills in silence bow
  Before the splendor of her face.

Across the prairie, slope by slope,
  Where rich, luxurious grasses sweep
  Their surging waves down hollows deep,
The silver-footed moonbeams grope
  And kiss them in their restless sleep.

Among the reeds the moonbeams twine
Their fingers of ethereal white,
And glimmering spots of argent light
Deep in the wrinkled water shine,
Like jewels from the crown of night.

The queenly orb, ascending slow
Her star-strewn pathway up the sky,
Drops from the glittering depths on high
Her image to the depths below,
In liquid glory there to lie.

Sleep, wanderer of the atmosphere!
Sleep, while the stealthy wavelets roll
Across this broken silver bowl,
That lights the waters rippling near
With night's irradiating soul.

Sleep, ere the pale dawn's noiseless robe
Drags through the dew its skirts of gray,
To make a pathway for the day
Across the dusky, slumbering globe,
And light thee on thy homeward way.

Oh, may that Power whose presence fills
  This glorious vault from earth to dome,
  Guard all who sleep and all who roam,
And o'er the everlasting hills
  Guide every wandering spirit home.

THE TRUE POET.

The truest poet is the bard
  Who sings for others — one who finds
  A balm to solace aching minds,
Though he himself be evil-starred.

He sings not to himself alone,
  Like one who looks into a glass
To view his tears and cry, "Alas,
  That I such mournful hours have known!"

There are a million hearts that bleed,
  But have no voice to tell their woe;
  And tears in secret rivers flow,
Making no sound for love to heed.

To him the right divine belongs
  To crown affliction, and to fill
  The hearts that suffer and are still,
With the sweet friendship of his songs.

His presence fills a myriad souls,
  Though he himself be far from them;
  Though they but touch his garment's hem
His power moves in them, and controls.

They know his voice; it has a tone
  That seems familiar to their thought
  As if his truthful heart had caught
A sense of passion from their own.

Their struggling feelings find a vent
  In his rich eloquence of pen;
  For they are but his fellow men,
And he their brother, well content.

He does not choose to walk apart,
  With some few worshippers that bow
  Whene'er he lifts his drooping brow
To tell some fancy in his heart.

Where'er the people toil or pray,
  He stands with sympathetic mind,
  And reads the poem of mankind
In reverent mood from day to day.

He lingers not by tinkling rills
And silver fountain-spray of song,
But by that ocean, vast and strong,
Of human joys and human ills —

That ocean, whose impetuous tide
Surges and flows forevermore
Against the strange and silent shore
From whence no echo e'er replied.

His song repeats the ebb and swell
That breaks on time's unyielding beach,
As when the winds and waters teach
Their music to an ocean-shell.

Song is his passion and his care;
In it he lives, with it he dies;
Winged by its power, he hopes to rise —
Beyond success, beyond despair,—

To those sublimer hills whereof
He sings on earth, and wand'ring there,
To breathe with Heaven's ethereal air
The perfect harmony of love.

When sinks the monarch from his throne
To mingle with the dust of earth,
The power that gave his greatness birth
Dies with him — 'twas his name alone.

But thou, interpreter of meek
And voiceless souls, when dies away
The fire that lit thy honored clay
And warmed thy heart to feel and speak,—

In every mind and every heart,
In every flower, and every breath,
In storm and sun, in life and death,
Thy spirit will outlive thine art.

The treasured words that thou hast said,
Like seeds wide scattered from thy hand,
Will blossom rich in every land,
Perpetual blessings from the dead.

THE WANDERER'S SONG.

I have wandered through many a land in my time,
Seen many a sight that was famous and strange;
The glory of kings in the height of their prime,
The wrecks of ambition, the triumphs of change;

The prince in his palace, the clown in his cot,
The priest and the soldier, the lover and lass,
The singers of earth who have brightened our lot,
And the poets whose names are recorded on brass;

I have heard the long thunders of eloquence roll,
With the din of applause sounding up on their track,
When the heavenward wings of a fiery soul
Beat up to the stars and swept gracefully back;

I have drunk from the chalice that scholars bestow,
The lore of the stars, and the secrets of earth;
At the shrines of the world I have bended me low,
At the footstool of genius, honor and worth.

But wherever my feet have been prompted to roam,
Through the temples of art, o'er the plains of the West,
In the din of the world, or the quiet of home,
I have found that one passion o'ermasters the rest.

'Tis the life of all life, and the balm for all care;
'Tis the angel that lightens the toil of the slave;
'Tis the lamp of the wise and the crown of the fair,
And the beacon that brightens the dream of the brave.

'Tis the burden of song and the genius of art,
The meed of devotion, the watchword of Truth,
The power that finds voice in the lowliest heart,
In the wrinkles of age and the blushes of youth.

One halo of sympathy girdles the earth,
That will never grow dim till her death-doom of flame.
From the throne of the king to the cottager's hearth
The lips of the people re-echo its name.

A health to dear Love! In the fountain of song
We will quaff one rich measure, which she shall inspire.

A curse on his head who shall do thee a wrong !—
The curse of remorse and unsated desire !

A health to dear Love ! May her blessing descend
On the hearts that recall with a smile and a sigh
The head that was never too weary to bend
O'er the cradle that rocked to a music gone by.

We will drink with the world, and the world will reply,
Forgetting awhile all its passions in this,
And remembering only the lip and the eye
That could sink all delights in a smile or a kiss.

A health to dear Love ! our first friend and our last :
In childhood she guarded; in manhood she charms;
And at length, when our joys and our sorrows are past,
May we sink to our rest in her sheltering arms !

THE UNSEEN HARVEST.

"And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend."
—LONGFELLOW.

My friend, you sang one happy night
A song so full of tenderness
That tears which I could not repress
Came up in mists before my sight.

You did not know — how could you know? —
That every sound, like sunlit rain,
Cooled the parched garden of my brain,
For germs of Heaven to live and grow.

Ah, who on earth can tell how deep
The tides of passion flow along?
'T will need an angel's hand to reap
The harvest of one mortal song!

Your music was a frame of light
  Which held a picture in my breast: —
A woman singing to the night
  A melody of faith and rest:

The hands are folded, and the face
  Is lifted to the sky, as though —
An exile from that glorious place —
  She yearns to leave the gloom below.

The features have no lovely mould,
  But yet they seem surpassing fair,
As if God's presence, as of old,
  Had shed a ray of glory there.

Her music has no juggling skill;
  She sings to Heaven, and not to earth,
And every strain steals back to thrill
  The patient heart which gave it birth.

Sometimes methinks her fingers press
  This feverish, weary soul of mine
With the invisible caress
  Of pity, human, yet divine.

Sometimes, like one who stops to hear
The warbling of a bird that sings
Its vespers in some covert near,
Ere twilight spreads her brooding wings,

I listen in the solitude
And gathering shadows of the mind
To learn that psalm of grief subdued,
That peace whereto we are so blind.

As one who stands, concealed by night,
Before some window where a face
Smiles from the indoor life and light
Which shed a splendor round the place:

So wandering memory sees you then,
Encircled by the glow of years,
And all unknown, bequeaths again
Her melancholy thanks in tears.

Ah, not the world's obsequious praise,
Nor the cold flattery of the tomb,
Can sweeten Love's unselfish days
Or take one shadow from their gloom;

But 'tis the humbler fame which springs
From grateful spirits that can give
Divinity to mortal things
And bid a transient action live.

For he who showers his kindly deeds
Sows not alone on earthly sod,
But scatters with immortal seeds
The unseen harvest fields of God.

THE FALLS.

Here let us pause and listen,—
  You are weary of wand'ring so long,—
The city's confusion and discord
  Are hushed to a murmured song,
And the hoarse, deep tone of the river
  Rises triumphantly strong.

Above the brink of the torrent,
  That plunges down with a roar,
Like a shattered column of silver
  Strewn over a shining floor
The moon's long image lies rippling
  In splendor from shore to shore.

The mills, with their ponderous humming,
  And clustered windows of light,
Glare out from the clinging shadows

That checker their massive height
Like giants who watch from their stronghold
For the prey they devour in the night.

But hearken not to their clamor;
They are but as sounds of a day
To the voice that rolls upward forever
From the cloudy veil of the spray,
Crying in prophet-like thunder
To all who pass by on the way.

Methinks 'tis eternity's echo,
Attuned to a mortal ear; —
A symbol of unfelt grandeur
That is faintly mirrored here; —
An earthly revelation
Of the profounder sphere.

Ah, how it steals up through the silence
That it scarcely seems to jar!
As when in some great cathedral,
Where the holy singers are,
The hush that broods over the people
The music does not mar.

'Tis the organist of Nature,
Who plays in a solemn key
The harmony majestic
That forever seems to be
In the moaning of a tempest
And the surging of the sea.

When the contemplative spirit
Is wrapped in the starry calm,
The slumberous chant of the water
Floats over the soul like balm,
With the power and exaltation
Of an old Hebraic psalm.

The Past and the Present and Future
Join in the chords sublime,
And the long reverberations
That ring through the halls of Time
Float up the twilight of ages
In a melancholy chime.

Perhaps some curious stranger,
Pausing where now we stand,
Will hear in the sounding torrent

The speech of a greater land,
While the lights of another city
Stream downward on every hand.

And we, who now, like shadows,
Glide over the disc of earth,
Perhaps may come to his fancy
Like ghosts to an alien hearth,
And point him to the cycle
Of a perished nation's birth;

Even as now a phantom
Of the unhistoric past
Points down the long oblivion
Where centuries gather fast,
And we, with our poor achievements,
Will be forgotten at last.

DEDICATION FOR A SCRAP-BOOK.

As one who journeys o'er a path unknown,
Through pleasant meadows, where, on either hand,
The odorous flowers in brilliant clusters stand,
And, loth to leave such beauty there alone,
He plucks some flower, more fragrant, fairer grown,
Than all the rest, and, still dissatisfied,
He turns his wandering steps from side to side,
Where starry faces shine by clod and stone;—
And when the shadows drape the earth in brown,
He hastens homeward, bearing, as he goes,
The dews of Heaven, that softly scatter down
To kiss his treasures, and the night-wind blows
Their freshened odor through the dusty town,
As the tired wanderer seeks his deep repose:—
So he who gathers, as he goes along
The path of life, some flowers of thought and song,
And bears them with him, though they may not claim
The honor due to some illustrious name,

Shall feel their freshness, like some olden tune
That warms December with a song of June,
And hear their voices ringing through his breast
In the dark shadows leading on to rest.

LOVE AND DEATH.

"I would that Love were a philosopher,"
That she might clasp the hand of Death and say:
"Thou art my friend; I will not mourn, nor pray
For thee to leave my presence." Then to her
Would answer Death's black-hooded messenger:
"'Tis better so; let us be friends to-day,
For thou wilt know, when I am far away,
That 't was an angel sent to minister."
I would 't were so, for then the suffering wight
To his last bed in happy mood might creep,
And hear no sobs of agony and fright
Break the dread languor of his fatal sleep,
Nor see dear faces, desolately white,
Blotted with tears he would not have them weep.

ST. VALENTINE.

TO * * * * *

Oh, lady, if to you there came
A lover with a humble name,
Strong in the knighthood of his youth,
With heart of love and lips of truth,
What greater tribute could he pay
Than thus with heartfelt voice to say? —

"You wake in me a nobler thrill
Of purer thought and gentler will,
A tenderer manhood, none the less
Heroic for its tenderness.
Your fancies, while they please, inspire
And kindle a divine desire —
A wish to reach the highest good
That crowns the height of womanhood.
Your smiles and tears in turn allure
To be as pure as you are pure."

Thus might he say, and not blaspheme
The charm of Love's ennobling dream
With those wild rhapsodies which praise
The beauty born of summer days.
What matter though your cheek be fair
As the last glow of sunset air?
What though your eyes were amethyst,
Your lips more sweet than lips have kissed?
What though on hand and brow and tress
Were stamped a perfect loveliness?
And though your voice had power to woo
Seraphic eyes to look on you? —
We do not worship gods of stone,
Nor trust in loveliness alone.
No! 'tis the beauty of the soul
That sanctifies and crowns the whole,
Imparts the grace that men revere,
And makes existence doubly dear.

Oh, lady, when the happy prime
Of Youth's delightful summertime
Has passed into the riper age
That adds to life its holiest page,
May men look up to you and say —

" Her beauty has not passed away ;
But every grace of soul or mind,
By love or sorrow well refined,
Has shed a sacred halo o'er
Her beauty, purer than before.
Her hand is stronger to uphold,
Her voice to counsel, than of old.
Beside her men grow clean, and thrust
Their evil passions into dust ;
For, lo ! in her we know and see
The flower of women yet to be,
Supreme in love, in faith supreme,
And strong to conquer and redeem."

THE LAST HOUR.

Good-bye, old year, good-bye !
The fairy of the lonely night
Has draped the woods in frosty lace ;
Each branch beneath the glittering sky
Is fringed with jewels, silver-white,
Transforming e'en the dreariest place
To an enchanted hall of ice
In Winter's crystal Paradise.

Good-bye, old year, good-bye !
'Tis fitting in a spot like this
To say the words, and feel the thought
Press on our spirits like a kiss
From thine invisible lips — as though
Our listening suspense had caught
A sharp, cold breath of silent woe !

Good-bye, old year, good-bye !
Youth smiles, and lightly bids thee go,
But age, remembering, with a sigh,
How many a friend has parted so,
Looks sadly down the misty past,
Through shadows of the years gone by,
To watch thee fade from life at last.

We leave with thee, for good or ill,
Our gifts of action — all are thine ;
But there are thoughts we cherish still
That parting makes but more divine ;
Memorials of thy greener hours,
Bright immortelles that used to shine
Amid thy wreaths of earthly flowers.

There is a voice thou canst not take
From out the chambers of the mind ;
A face which thou must leave behind;
A charm thy sadness cannot break !
Hope, Memory, Love — the sisterhood
Of deathless thoughts — these still remain
To write a prophecy of good
On every future leaf of pain.

Good-bye, old year, good-bye!
As those who soon must follow thee
We say the words, and think of how
These snowy flowers on shrub and tree
Will blossom underneath the stars,
In coming winters, e'en as now,
And the dead grass, like sheeny spars,
Bend over many a quiet brow.

Oh, when in stillness like to this
We glide beyond the realm of clay,
Be this our praise: that we have left
Some fragrant memory of bliss,
Some balm of hope to grief bereft,
Some light of that celestial day
Which parts the spirit from the clod
And ushers in the years of God.

BABY BESSIE.

Wondering eyes that laugh and shine
With a deep, unshadowed light,
Is there not a gleam divine
Lingering in your eyes to-night ?

Waxen arms that never fold,
But forever grope and reach,
Many hearts have you to hold,
But you clasp them, all and each.

Ruddy lips, that woo a kiss
As a blossom courts the sun ;
Will you be as sweet as this
When your budding years are done ?

Tiny feet that dance and toss
In a rapturous burst of glee,—
Will your step as lightly cross
Treacherous snares and learn to flee ?

Helpless fairy, cunning elf,
Cooing in your mother's arms,
You are wisdom's truest self,
You have beauty's native charms.

Oh, you have some witching art,
As you nestle, like a dove,
Close to that protecting heart,
With your wordless sounds of love.

Wee enchantress, sweet coquette,
When you smile the sunbeams shine!
Happy birds sang never yet
With such silvery notes as thine.

So forever may you sing
From a heart as undefiled,
And your gayest laughter ring
With the music of a child.

A PRAYER.

Oh, God, when all alone we stand,
  Secluded with our thoughts and thee,
Without one human voice at hand
  To cavil, or an eye to see ;
When the dissembling masks we wear,—
  The jests wherewith we baffle truth,—
The pride which glosses heart-sick care,—
  The follies of neglectful youth : —

When these forsake the doubtful mind,
  And leave it naked to despair,
And in the dark we grope to find
  Some pathway to the upper air ; —
Then, from the gloomy maze of doubt,
  Oh, God, our unknown prayers ascend
That Truth at length may find us out
  And lead us homeward, to the end !

Ah, me, this hunger makes us kin !
For every soul, at times, will cry
From those lone chambers far within
The portals of the lip and eye;
But none save Thou alone canst know
The anguished moments when we cast
Our every mortal instinct low,
And plead for only truth at last !

Oh, pity Thou our feeble hate,
Our shallow thoughts, our bitter zeal,
The misery we ourselves create
To feel, and make our brothers feel !
Yea, teach us Thou alone art right,
And that our cherished creeds may be
But rays of that diviner light,
Which glorifies and shines from Thee.

THE SNOW-FALL.

Down from the limitless caverns of air
  The snow descends with a silent sweep.
Old Winter shakes from his rimy hair
A cloak for the landscape brown and bare,
  Where the flowers uncovered sleep.

Over the skeleton trees the flakes,
  Like a white-folded mantle, are hurriedly spread ;
Over the breasts of the shining lakes,
And the banks where the reed, like a coward, shakes
  Its withered and slender head.

On the forms of the living, the graves of the dead,
  It drops with a ceaseless and measured flow,
And our eyes look up to the depths o'erhead,
Till from heights never-ending God seems to shed
  The infinite hosts of the snow !

And so peace comes to the eager soul
From spaces far deeper than fancy can go —
White, beautiful thoughts, with a gentle control,—
Till Eternity's sunrise in glory unroll
Over a spirit as pure as the snow.

SONNET — THE MOON'S ECLIPSE.

How like this orb — who, from her maiden throne,
Amid the blossomed desert of the sky,
Attracts the homage of the wandering eye,
By reason of a beauty all her own, —
Is a great love, whose white and modest zone
Moves not above the envious world so high
But that gross shadows, creeping slowly by,
Eclipse what once was purity alone.
But yet, not long such darkness can obscure
The heaven-born light of that transcendent sphere ;
Forth from the veil, in radiance still as pure,
It bursts serenely, and the heart is clear ;
Through every gloom its hallowed charms endure,
And each new peril makes it trebly dear.

CARLYLE.

Unflattering Mentor, Caledonian seer,
Whom some deride, yet all are forced to hear,
Thyself art gone, but thou hast left behind
The giant footprints of a noble mind,
Which others follow doubtfully and slow,
As half-afraid to linger or to go!

Impatient teacher of a headstrong age,
Too vain to brook the prophet or the sage,
Thy feet upon another Sinai trod,
And visions blazed upon thy soul from God,
While recreant nations, guiltier than of old,
Kneeled to that glittering superstition — gold!

Thou wast not coined of the degenerate stuff
Which holds the fashion of the hour enough;
Thou wast not moulded of the waxen clay
Which takes the image of the passing day,

But on the front of all thine actions shone
The stamp of power — to be thyself alone!

It was not thine to soothe the world's content
With garnished phrases, half-sincerely meant;
To lull despair with eloquence of sound;
To cheer ambition to destruction's bound;
To prate the flimsy gossip of the time,
And furnish systems reason for a crime!

Thy mission compassed a diviner aim
Than present glory or expected fame,
And though it was thy destiny to feel
The barbs which natures such as thine conceal;
Though warped by grief to aspects cold and rude,
And cankered by the rust of solitude,
Yet e'en such fretful maladies as these
Might shame luxurious, philosophic ease.

It chafed thy soul to know how strangely numb
The frozen scruples of the world become;
How dully blind the spiritual sight
Where men forge truth, and usage makes the right!

Thou wast the prophet of the subtler day,
Crying along thy solitary way
To all the people with a voice that knew
The noblest courtesy of being true.

Proud Mammon's gay and sycophantic throng
Needs not thy voice in eulogy or song,
For slavish myriads round his gaudy throne
Abjectly kneel, and wish his pomp their own;
But who like thee is left to teach and warn,
Despite neglect, or flattery, or scorn?

Such men as thou bear on from height to height
The kindling beacons of Promethean light,
Whose glory, streaming through the dusk of time,
Paints the vague future with a glow sublime,
Yet startles them who love the drowsy shade
Which Custom's hoary eminence has made.

Ay, such as thou — when Mammon's carnal power
Grows drunk with madness in a braggart hour —
When ominous fingers trace upon the wall
Truth's malediction brooding over all —
Fear not to read the Babylonian's doom,
And point oppression to its final tomb.

Oh, let thy frailties perish with the dust
Which Death unburdens of its weary trust ;
Let men forget thee in thy mortal frame.
The exhaustless fountain whence thy greatness came
May lie beyond this short and narrow vale,
But its deep waters never pause or fail ;
And they who love the power to feel and think
Will stoop beside their lucid springs to drink,
And quaff from thence the intellectual wine
That flows eternal from a soul like thine.

TO A YOUNG MAN.

Dream not of love ! — spend not thy youth
  In vain imaginings of good,
Though fair and sweet and full of truth
  Seem thine ideal womanhood.

This fleeting vision — though so pure —
  That brightens many an idle day,
Is but a gay mirage to lure
  Thy life from its appointed way.

Pursue no phantom such as this ;
  It pleases but to cheat at last.
'Tis but a shadowy shape of bliss,
  And leaves no brightness on the past.

True love is only his reward
  Whose life deserves the precious meed.
A great affection owns no lord
  Who wins no palm for thought or deed.

Thou needst not search for Love, for she —
When thou art toiling in thy place —
Will surely come and look on thee,
With Heaven's own glory in her face.

While thou art battling for renown
Amid the tumult of the age,
Her hands will bring a fresher crown
Than ever laureled king or sage.

Oh, what a wealth of manhood then
Canst thou lay gladly at her feet !
What power and hope that other men
Have wasted in their own conceit !

And she will soothe thy weariest hour,
And cheer the gloom of thy despair ;
Her touch will give thee newer power
To conquer doubt and laugh at care.

Then sigh no more for joys to be ; —
Somewhere, on some Elysian slope,
Love gathers flowers to weave for thee
A deathless crown of bliss and hope.

THE MILLS — A FANCY.

We stood within the frowning mills
When night lay sleeping on the hills.
A din of sound, a glare of light,
Went flashing through the ear and sight.
The brawny laborers moved about,
Among the shadows, in and out,
Or bent above the scented pine
With but the language of a sign.

The chain-bound logs, whose rugged bark
Dripped with the water's clinging mark,
Shot underneath the flying knife
That glided through their sluggish life.
With constant stroke the shining wheel
Hurled down its viewless blades of steel,
And smote with an unwavering sweep
The massive giants in their sleep.

Above, the huge and dusty beams,
Half-seen through shades and flaring gleams,
Frowned from their dark and caverned height,
Where crouched the sullen gloom of night,
Jealous that mortals should invade
Its lonely heritage of shade.

Beneath, the dusky river lay,
Where thronged the drifted logs at bay,
Floating in darkness, side by side,
Shorn of their old, majestic pride.
But in my thought each fallen king
Still wore the rustling garb of spring,
And answered with continual sighs
The wind that haunts the northern skies.
And other voices entered in,
Like chorus to the measured din,
And sang amid the jarring hum
A song of riper days to come.

"O, prostrate monarchs,"— thus the song —
"Although your sinews white and strong
Shall ne'er in wintry hours withstand
The tempests of a stormy land,

Perhaps, in some remoter clime,
Your life, through long decades of time,
In loving use familiar grown,
Shall wear a beauty not its own ;
Then hands as soft as summer flowers
Shall press thee in the twilight hours,
When the red fire-light's dancing gleams
Wrap thee in happy sunset dreams.

" Perhaps some mother then shall croon
For childhood's ears, a cradle-tune,
Or Love's enraptured passion trace
A blush on some enkindled face,
Or careless voices, clear and gay,
Laugh down the troubles of the day.
Mayhap the wanderer may recall
Thy form in his ancestral hall,
And lay his hands on thee to bless,
With one long sigh of tenderness,
And at the touch will come again
The thought of half-forgotten men,
Of lovely faces, old and young,
The beaming eye, the gentle tongue,
And all the dearest scenes of earth

That clustered round an olden hearth.
And while he dreams his head will rest
In silence on thy carven breast,
Lest other hands should bear away
The token of his childhood's day."

VICTORY IN DEATH.

Like two relentless combatants that fight
In some lone place, remote from human aid,
Till both sink down, with broken weapons laid
By nerveless arms, while o'er their bloody sight
Drops the black pall of Death's concealing night ; —
So often man, against some vice arrayed
That drags him down with purpose to degrade
His noblest aspirations toward the right,
Struggles to win dominion o'er his foe, —
At length to conquer ; — but he fights in vain ;
For, when his sin lies powerless and low,
He falls himself, o'ermastered by his pain ;
And, while his life ebbs piteously slow,
No heart but God's can count his bitter gain.

FAME.

Close to Death's portals a minstrel lay,
His silent harp unstrung ;
And he wept to think he must pass away
With his noblest songs unsung.

But the shadowy angel to whom belongs
The sceptre of gloom and dread
Whispered, "The blessing of thine own songs
Crowns thee, living or dead.

"Thy fame lies deep in a tender heart,
As pearls lie under the sea,
And the tears thy music has caused to start
Are jewels that shine for thee.

"The holy passions which thou has stirred —
The memories passing sweet —
Fancies no genius can ever word —
Dreams Love can never repeat —

"The comfort that steals to the wearied brain —
The aspirations divine —
And the faith which lightens the throb of pain —
Such laurels of fame are thine.

"What matters it to the lark who sings
In the heart of the morning glow
That the airy sweep of its tiny wings
Is veiled from the world below?

"If it touch one heart with its passionate strain,—
Lift one thought nearer to God,—
It has not risen unknown or in vain
From its nest in the humble sod.

"Such are the wreaths that the angels wear,
And the mortals who win them here —
Some with the crown of a grateful prayer,
Some with the meed of a tear."

THE SABBATH.

'Tis a law ordained by nature,
And sanctified by God,
That rest should come to the weary
As dew to a drooping sod ;

That peace should come to the troubled
And faltering heart of care,
As moonlight steals through the darkness
To mellow the sombre air.

As flowers scatter their fragrance,
As birds in the gloaming sing,
As snow descends in the winter,
As leaves burst forth in the spring,

As a wind to a sweating forehead
That is faint with the noonday sun,
So comes the Sabbath to mortals
With the blessing of labors done.

There needs some cloister of silence,
Remote from the turmoil of men,
Some Eden of peace-giving beauty
Where Heaven is reflected again,

That the soul may pause in its journey,
And know that the desert of time
Still holds an unwithered oasis
To lighten its desolate clime.

Oh, sacred forever to worship
That spot in its quiet should be,
Where the spirit may drink from the fountains
Which rise from Eternity's sea ;

Where the aching bosom of sorrow
Forgets, for a little, its pain,
And the burdens endurance must carry
Are lifted from body and brain.

As a traveler glances a moment
Through the cottage's open door,
And sees the home of his fancy
Pictured, as often before,

So the Sabbath is but a portal
  Through which the spirit may see
Its home far off like a vision
  Of happiness yet to be.

THE FATAL SEARCH.

Like one who leaves the paths his fellows tread,
  And braves the dangerous wilderness around
  To seek an Eden none have ever found,
And, lost in mazes which he cannot thread,
Wanders till his bewildered steps are led
  To walls of rock, whose gloomy heights are crowned
  By falling shades and loneliness profound,
And there sinks down in weariness and dread —
So he whose falsehood or untaught conceit
  Allures him to explore the wilds of vice,
Follows a poor mirage, a bitter sweet,
  A glittering bubble — and himself the price —
Until he sinks despairing at the feet
  Of Death's stern gates, remote from Paradise!

UNWRITTEN POETRY.

The noblest poetry of earth
Is not invoked by mortal pen;
The sweetest song ne'er finds a birth
Save in the voiceless hearts of men.
We only use our stammering speech
To shadow forth the hidden mind,
And with uncertain fingers reach
For chords we know not how to find.

From morn's baptismal dew and fire
Till evening's lingering sunset flame,
All Nature's book, all Nature's choir,
Is full of thoughts without a name;
And Night, with her mysterious beams —
Lamps of the speculative soul —
Pours forth uncomprehended dreams
On the dim heaven's majestic scroll.

There's poetry in Love's clear eye
Which genius vainly seeks to write ;
There's melody in laugh and sigh
Which only lives in our delight ;
There's feeling which ourselves alone
May cherish, but can never speak ;
There's joy which must be all our own,
Since hearts are strong and lips are weak.

Yet how our unfledged spirits long
To soar beyond this earthly wall,
And blend in one o'ermastering song
The music which is in us all !
With eager breath we strive to fan
Emotion's still and holy blaze
Into an altar fire that man
Shall worship in succeeding days.

Though Genius, rapt by zeal intense,
Sometimes can rise on struggling wings,
Yet still, what feeble eloquence
Is in the grandest strain she sings !
But we, who marvel as we hear
That soul on its impassioned flight,

Can only hold the singer dear
Who gives us language e'en so slight.

Oh, let us be content to read
Within the volume of our lives
That poetry of thought and deed
By which our happiness survives —
That rhythm to whose solemn beat
The pulse of all mankind is stirred
In rapture too profound and sweet
For the divinest human word.

We have the promise — all who yearn —
That in the loftier age to come
These o'ercharged souls of ours shall learn
To be no more constrained and dumb;
But e'en the feeblest hand shall sway
The chords of life, and every voice,
Inspired like larks at break of day,
Shall make another world rejoice.

THE DYING ACTOR.

Take from his brow the coronet of fame,
Decked with the jewels of a shining name —
Illusive tinsel, such as serves to blind
The pitiful ambitions of mankind.

This is no mask ; he will not rise again
To ape the actions and desires of men ;
He will not rise to feel his labor o'er —
For he's himself in this, and nothing more.

Let fall the curtain, let the lights be dim !
What's he to earth, or what is earth to him ?
Who of the idle and inconstant herd,
That thundered praise for every fiery word
Which shook his frame with passion's mimic rage,
Would care to look on this ungilded stage,
And spend one honest sigh, one serious breath,
On the too-faithful scenery of Death ?

Who of them all, so lavish to admire,
And urge the heat of thought's unnatural fire,
Would shed a drop of Mercy's healing rain
Upon the feverish embers of his brain ?

He was the puppet of a vacant hour,
Who roused their fancies to unwonted power,
And thronged their minds with phantom shapes that led
A wanton measure through the narrow head !
Ah, these white lips do speak a better part
Than ever masked the passions of a heart ;
This unfeigned suffering, this pallid woe,
Mocks the poor triumphs of dissembling show,
And teaches truth which not the art of man
Can e'er impress, and only nature can.
The dying gladiator, far from home,
Who sank in blood to sate applauding Rome ;
The panting Greek who sped the desperate race
Till bursting veins poured crimson o'er his face ;
The bleeding Spaniard, for an erring thrust
Pierced by mad horns and trampled in the dust —
All with stern fingers point to Pleasure's throne,
To mock her with inventions of her own ;

And these hot lips she will not stoop to hear
Cry like a trumpet in her heedless ear !

Oh, Pleasure, gaudy queen of blinded slaves,
Who drink thy cup beside their wretched graves,
Turn hither those lascivious eyes of thine,
Bright with the madness of thy sensual wine,
And view these fleshless limbs, these eyes that seem
Like caverns lit with but one flickering gleam ;
The prostrate brow which guards those earthly cells
Where the tired mind a few sad moments dwells,
And the spent lamp of genius, burning low,
Reveals no pathway from these shades below !
Think on the souls that fall a sacrifice
Upon the rotten hecatombs of vice ;
Think on the lives that all unseen expire
To feed thine altars with unholy fire :
And then remember, when thou art most gay,
What hand shall snatch thy worthless crown away,
And grind the hollow baubles of thy shame
Into the brutal dust from which they came !

DEFEATED.

Breathe low, ye winds, breathe low !
Touch not with your rude hands that prostrate form,
With the last sparks of being faintly warm ;
Breathe softly, as ye go
Through this deserted hovel, where the light
Of Heaven makes ghastlier the surrounding night.

The long, black buildings stretch away in line,
Till lost in the dim air;
And far away the glimmering street lamps shine —
A blue, diminished glare.

The shadows, thick and weird,
Steal through their native gloom, with sluggish stealth,
Like shapeless ghosts of that departed wealth
And grandeur which upreared
Its arrogant pomp where now the wretched slaves
Of misery hasten to unhallowed graves.

Tell me, ye winds, how oft
That half-clothed form has felt your bitter chill,
While, on his couches soft
The tyrant Luxury pleased Desire at will;
While Pleasure, in her thousand halls, grew sick
Of empty, heartless mirth,
As the gross, sensual air grew misty-thick
With breath of soulless earth.

Tell me how oft the pang
Of aching hunger cursed his honest toil,
When round about him sprang
Plethoric harvests from the fertile soil;
When the vain epicure, with senseless whim,
Glutted his dainty taste
With wines and foods, until that soul grew dim
Which manhood once had graced.

Tell me how anguish gnawed
Within his breast, and paled his wrinkled face,
When, on life's pathway broad,
He knew himself an outcast from his race.

What secret thoughts of crime
Surged in his desperate soul that still was white.

As the strong hand of Time
Pushed him still further from the heaven-touched height
Which he, with patient steps, had hoped to climb.

Oh, bitterest agony!
How didst thou pierce his care-encrusted life,
When gaunt-limbed Want set free
The spirits of his children and his wife!

* * * * * * * * *

Here close his cheerless life's tear-blotted scroll,—
One of a million such!—
And, since he lived with slowly-maddening mind,
And suffered over-much,
Oh God, forgive the sin
That closed his sad life's miserable lease,
And he will find within
The happy courts of Heaven the longed-for peace.

And though these nerveless hands have ne'er unfurled
The banner of success,
Yet he, therefore, in Love's enduring world,
Shall not be glad the less,
But find a nobler, larger happiness.

FLOWERS FROM THE BATTLE FIELD.

The tread of crowds in the old grave-yard
  Was light and slow, with a musing pace.
There were dim-eyed veterans, battle-scarred,
  With the same proud spirit in every face.
There were women, too, with the scars of grief
  That would burst afresh in a frequent tear,
And wondering children, the sole relief
  Of the sorrowful mothers bending near.

The glitter of arms, the measured tread,
  The sharp salute, and the voice of prayer,
The loving wreaths for the patriot dead,
  And the grave-voiced man with the snowy hair,—
All, like a vision of war-like days,
  Went calmly by through the misty glow,
And the singers were chanting their solemn praise
  Of the silent heroes who slept below,

When a lithe, fair girl of the Southern land
Came gliding slow through the rank and file,
With a cluster of flowers in her trembling hand,
And knelt by a grave in the human aisle.
Rich was the mound with its fragrant gifts;
The marble shaft at the soldier's head
Was crowned by offerings — flowery drifts
Of amethyst, purple, white and red.

A thousand eyes, with a wondering look,
Turned full on her, as the music died,
And the white-haired minister closed his book
And stood by the kneeling maiden's side.
"Hast thou a tribute for him who lies
In a soldier's flower-crowned resting-place?"
The girl raised upward her shining eyes,
That lit the bloom of her lovely face:

"No braver soldier, no truer one,
Than moulders here in your Northern clime,
E'er turned his face to a Southern sun
To wait in anguish the close of time.
Oh, it was pitiful; — one so young,—
But he only smiled when I found him there.

And a whisper burst from his parching tongue
Of a grief that was hard for him to bear.

And I was proud — but I pitied him so —
Pitied him ? — Loved him ! For many a day,
Beneath the roof of his Southern foe,
Dying, yet lingering, he lay.
Oh, he was noble, gentle, brave,—
Hero and saint he seemed to me ;
And the hush of the dreamy autumn gave
His patience a halo I wept to see.

He taught me a life that was truer than mine,
As I watched the light of his clear eyes sink,
With flashes of glory that seemed divine,
Down to the gloom of our earthly brink ;
And, dying, he held in his stiffening grip
Roses and violets, triple-hued ;
And pressed them close to his bloodless lip —
His life and death's similitude.

Oh, let it pass ; those days are gone ; —
Yet still — though why I cannot tell —
My thoughts, my prayers, my love, are drawn

To that dear valley where he fell.
And, ere I go, I only pray
To drop amid this floral pride
My tribute to the better day —
Flowers from the meadow where he died."

THE MESSAGE OF THE LILY.

TO A YOUNG LADY WHO RECEIVED A WHITE LILY ON FEBRUARY 14.

Some minds could read the stars, 't was thought of old,
And trace Fate's hand in vast and fiery lines;
Heaven's jeweled scroll was written o'er with signs
Of prophecies and wonders manifold,
By some almighty intellect unrolled.
'T is thus that Love, the astrologer, divines
In every flower on which the morning shines
A hidden beauty, and a hope untold!
God traced the meadows with a golden pen
Dipped in the hues of sunset skies above.
And the same power that shaped Love's message then
Breathes in this lily and your dreams thereof —
But you have read, and you can read again;
For God is love, and wrote the thoughts of Love!

CONSOLATION.

TO A MOTHER WHO HAS LOST HER SON.

Oh, Love, how bitter are the tears
  Which Death's stern sorrow wrings from thee!
  But yet their keenest gall may be
A solace for thine after years.

The saddest midnight of thy woe
  Can ne'er eclipse that star divine
  Whose rays are brightest when they shine
Through darkness on thy griefs below.

Oh, 't is a precious thought, and bears
  The stamp of Heaven, that somehow still
  The thread of God's benignant will
Doth lead thee to Him, unawares;

That when thou seemest most alone,
  And farthest from thy fellow men,
  God's arm is round about thee then,
And all thy sorrows are his own.

He teaches thy tear-blinded eyes
To see in each deserted place
That held a dear but vanished face
A sacred, happy vision rise.

He makes thy yearning soul to hear
In every psalm of Christian faith
A voice beyond the gates of Death,
That sings of peace, and not of fear.

Like one who hath a well-loved friend
In some far land to which he goes,
And will not falter, since he knows
What joy awaits his journey's end,

So in thy heart the fixed belief
That somewhere all who love shall meet
Will give thee wings whene'er thy feet
Are struggling in the slough of grief.

'T is but the journey of a day —
A little while, though seeming great,
Ere he who walked with thee of late
Will clasp thee in his arms and say,

"Why, Love, the path was not so long
That thou hadst need to mourn and weep
Because God's purpose was so deep
And his enforcing hands so strong.

"Thou hadst not wept couldst thou have known
What immortality and peace,
And happiness without surcease,
From sorrow and despair had grown."

Thus will he say, when, breast to breast,
In Heaven's first rapture ye commune,
Like two sweet voices in one tune
Of everlasting love and rest.

THE CYNIC'S REVERY.

Down the long hall the glittering chandeliers
Diffuse the lustre of their pendent spheres
O'er blended throngs whose gliding footsteps trace
Encircling measures with a buoyant grace.
On snowy cheeks the flush of pleasure glows,
And turns the bloodless lily to the rose ;
Hearts beat to music, while from lip and eye
The willing smile and unregretful sigh
Speak with that natural eloquence of bliss
Which needs no language, save a smile or kiss !

See yon fair image of our mistress — Love —
Whose eyes outbeam the trembling flames above ;
Whose supple form, bedecked in airy white,
Floats with smooth motion — like a dove in flight —
Among the brilliant windings of the dance,
While all her soul goes forth at every glance.
Yet, to mine eyes, her beauty does but seem
Like one pure lily on a shining stream,
Sailing majestic down the subtle tide,

While morning sunlight gilds its dewy pride.
And knows the lily what rough torrents break
Far from the quiet of its native lake —
What foamy cataracts thundering far away
Shall rend the petals of their fragile prey ?
Nay, now, such owlish prophecies of doom
Are but the shadows of their parent gloom ;
A sombre mind can darken all that's gay,
And unreal terrors haunt the brightest day.
Yet, for a moment, 'mid the festive throng
Methought a shape passed mournfully along,
With languid step, clasped hands, and loosened hair,
Eyes filled with all the meaning of despair,
Drooped head, and every piteous aspect known
To maiden sorrow, weeping and alone ;
A shadowy wreck of loveliness and youth,
Bereft of honor, love — but not of truth !

Ah, miserable truth ! what power thou hast
To conjure up a future from the past ;
To read beneath life's smoothly-written scroll
The voiceless records of an erring soul !
But, ah, how few of such as these discern
Thy sullen presence wheresoe'er they turn ;

Or, if by conscience yet compelled to see,
Will quit the feast to rise and follow thee!
How few assay the spurious bauble, joy,
And pluck the treasure from its coarse alloy!
Alas for him who gives his wishes reign;
Where passion urges angels plead in vain.

Oh, happier spirits, throned in quiet nooks,
Amid the world of nature and of books,
Who find in lofty thoughts and gracious deeds
All that the soul, and all the body needs;
Who, if by chance from social hours confined,
Can summon worlds and nations from the mind—
Ye are the souls on whom the right depends
To fathom wrongs and compass mighty ends;
Ye are the true, the infinitely blessed,
Calm in your actions, dreamless in your rest!
No feverish passions, never satisfied,
Beckon and thrust you from contentment's side;
No artificial pleasures ye require
To sate the temperate hunger of desire,
But still for you earth's natural joys suffice
To paint the world with hues of Paradise!
Ye never sit in ashes and in tears

Amid the ruins of unfruitful years,
And weigh against a poor and vanished gain
The heavy balance of remorse and pain.

Is 't not a pity that so fair a flower
Should waste its bloom to gratify an hour ?
But who will say, " Mine eyes to-night have seen
An angel's arm enclasp a libertine ? "
'T were all in vain ; such thoughts as these are best
To moulder in the silence of the breast.
Mankind brooks not that any hand should take
The sheltering roses from the sleeping snake.

Then peace be with you, God's divinest scheme,
Unsullied girlhood, man's divinest dream —
Your native Heaven defend ! You will not know
What venomed monster coils its folds below
Until, perhaps, your reckless footsteps stray
Across the flowers that cluster on your way,
And the vile serpent, from its rosy nest,
Springs to your heart — let misery tell the rest.

INNOCENCE.

What shall I call thee, Innocence ? A flower,
Clothed in the chastest robe of virgin hue,
And sparkling with the jewels of the dew,
That drinks the light of morning's radiant hour ?
Or else a bird, low-swinging from a spray
Of verdant boughs, and warbling to the ear
Of dreaming summer an enraptured lay
Of happy freedom, sunny atmosphere,
And the low music of the drowsy day ?

Or shall I sing thee as a gentle maid,
Fenced from the world by Love's protecting arms,
As white in thought, as blameless in her charms,
As e'er in earth's gross vesture was arrayed ? —
A vestal of the hearth, whose life is seen
So heaven-like in unsullied loveliness
That earthly shadows never intervene
To mar the purity of her caress,
Nor darken glances trustfully serene ?

Or, rather, shall I paint thee as a child,
Laughing with bright and natural sounds of glee;
Soft hands and yielding lips that seem to be
A sweet rebuke to hands and lips defiled;
Clear eyes, unconscious of the lustrous gleam
That sparkles gayly, tremulously bright,
In their calm depths, as when the modest beam
Of evening's star reveals its wavering light
In some still spring or smooth and limpid stream?

Nay, none of these—the flower will lose its bloom;
The bird fall earthward in the wintry blast;
The purest maid may rue her faith at last,
And childhood laugh, unconscious of its doom;
But thou art panoplied with warlike mail
Of adamant; no power can overthrow
Thy shield invincible, or make thee quail
At force, or treachery, or the sting of woe;
Thine arms were forged in Heaven, and will not fail

RUPERT ALMAYNE.

The leaves drift yellow about thy door,
Rupert Almayne ;
As rich as the golden and treasured store
That will gleam and glitter for thee no more,
Rupert Almayne.

The gold that showers from Nature's mint,
Rupert Almayne,
Has no shadow to mar its tint,
And hides in its splendor no subtle hint
Of a secret stain.

Hark to the wind ! It is strangely drear,
Rupert Almayne ;
'T is the mournful voice of the dying year.
But only of sorrow, and not of fear,
Rupert Almayne.

'T is not so utterly broken and sad,
So full of pain,
As the voice of love thou couldst have had,
Whose echo returns to drive thee mad,
Rupert Almayne.

Why dost thou start and tremble so,
Rupert Almayne ?
The passing wind tolls weird and slow ;
'T is the voice that is calling thee to go
From earth's domain.

Thy shadow has darkened the world with gloom,
Rupert Almayne ;
But there rises up from the open tomb
A vaster shadow of death and doom
To cloud thy brain.

Think, as thou goest, how many a hearth
Has felt thy bane,
But yet will blossom with hope and mirth,
And breathe no sigh when thou leavest earth,
Rupert Almayne.

This is the end of thy toiling here,
Rupert Almayne ;
Oh, if the wealth that has cost so dear
Could purchase for thee one honest tear,
'T were not in vain.

Loose thy hands from the golden rod --
Thy seal of reign —
That made the people to fear thy nod
As they were slaves and thou wert a god,
Rupert Almayne !

What is it the solemn night-wind saith,
Rupert Almayne ?
It bears a dirge in its hollow breath,
A wailing sound from the fields of death,
Like a funeral strain.

And the poor will sigh as it sweepeth past
With its gusty train ;
But they will not know that the warning b last
Hurries to judgment and justice at last
Rupert Almayne.

"HIS SOUL IS MARCHING ON."

CHILD : —

"Father, the drums beat loud and long,
But, deeper than their loudest beat,
The muffled thunder of a song
That times the tread of martial feet
Peals up the vistas of the street!

"A thousand torches toss and flare
Like fiery pennons, streaming bright
Against the sombre walls of night,
As if the dusky hosts that bear
Those flaming banners would affright
The very shadows from the air.

"Oh, father, would that thou couldst see
This mighty city, decked with fire,
That flings about the loftiest spire

The glow of this festivity !
Far as my straining eyes discern,
With diamond lights the windows burn,
And every arbor, walk and tree,
And terrace, where the people throng,
Gives back the flash, the cheer, the song,
Of some great victory ! "

FATHER : —

" Ay, child, my memory well supplies
The absent witness of my eyes ;
It only needs yon martial strain,
That ebbs and swells and dies away,
To kindle every sluggish vein
And paint a picture in my brain
Of Victory's jubilant array,
That greeted Freedom's natal day
With that exultant song.

" Oh, pæan of the true and brave !
We sang it 'round the soldier's grave
Who died to conquer wrong ;
We sang it when the camp-fire shed

Its softened aureole of red
On many a rugged form ;
We heard it ring when flame and lead
Belched through the battle's lurid storm,
When heroes stood and heroes fell
To glut with blood and groans and tears
The fiend of war's insatiate hell,
And seal the peace of future years.

" We sang it in the Northern pines ;
It floated down the rebel lines —
They heard it, and they knew too well
That the old spirit of the dead
The boldest front of battle led,
And where the tempest seemed to swell
With loudest thunder, deadliest fire,
'T was there to strengthen and inspire !

" And when our wounded ranks, beneath
The shattered stars and stripes we bore,
Turned home to peace and life once more,
With sabre buried in the sheath,
Methought that song, from sea to sea,
Burst from a happy people's tongue,

Until its music seemed to be
The one vast chord of jubilee
Wherewith the joyous nation rung.

"Ay, let the people sing it now!
The veteran will renew his prime;
The patriot of the later time
Will know why crime and hatred bow
To that unconquerable soul
Which marches still with sword of light
Where'er the wheels of progress roll,
And leads the foremost van of right!

"Ah, boy, there is no sound so grand,
None has such music for my ear,
As when across this mighty land
A people's voice, in song and cheer,
Pours like a vast, resistless tide,
On whose o'erwhelming surges ride,
In one triumphant bark,
Love, Justice, Knowledge, side by side,
Out of the danger-haunted dark,
Into the light of nobler days.
But on that strong, exultant flood

There is no tinge of martyr-blood,—
There lies no dead beneath those waves,
To rise like spectres from their graves
At every deeper note that plays
About the hidden depths of thought!
No froth of passion, deadly white,
Crowns the last billow of the song;
Its poised, majestic crest has caught
A ray of Heaven's approving light,
And, ebbing earthward, sweeps along
The old, dead shells of vanished wrong
Into the ocean of the right!"

LINES

SUGGESTED BY THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT GARFIELD.

No matter how the tides of life
Seethe o'er the rocks and shoals of strife ;
No matter how the storms of hate
Burst on the humble and the great,—
There's still a peace below them all,
Howe'er their fury rise and fall.

The mists of calumny and spite
May dim the truth's exalting light ;
The windy blast of hollow reeds
May drown the voice of manly deeds,
Yet there's emotion too profound
For plummets of the tongue to sound.

A mighty nation, like the sea,
In treacherous, shallow spots will be
Forever lashed to bubbling foam,
That drifts where'er the wind may roam ;
But in the people's broader heart
Unfathomed calms lie deep apart.

Upon that ocean's loyal breast,
Bark of our country, sail at rest,
Bearing upon thy solemn way
The life for which all patriots pray,
Till in some harbor, not remote,
Thy pennons thankfully shall float.

Around his prostrate form are furled
The drooping banners of the world ;
And each o'erladen breath of time
Whispers the hope of every clime,
The sympathy of great and good
For one of equal brotherhood.

Full in the noon of manhood's youth,
Beloved by all who love the truth,
Peer to the wise, the learned, the just,

A nation's promise, pride and trust,
About him shines, through joy or tears,
The glory of a hundred years.

The new-wreathed laurel on his brow
Can only be the greener now ;
'T is watered by the tender dew
Of all that makes us strong and true,
And burgeons richly in a day
With everlasting leaves of bay.

A nation at its chieftain's side
Lingers with sorrow, yet with pride,
And, linked in heart by woe and weal,
Knows how sublime it is to feel
The lofty kinship that can grace
Whate'er in man is poor and base.

Yet not to him alone we owe
The purest tribute men bestow,
But lay sincerely at her feet
Who makes his greatness so complete,
The highest meed for such a life —
Man's reverence for a noble wife.

Behold, in these two are combined
The attributes of soul and mind
Whereon the pillars of our land,
Broad-based and firm, securely stand,
And with foundations such as they
Our freedom cannot sink away.

AWE.

There's a spirit that comes with the eve,
And departs with the dawn of the day;
And whatever that spirit doth say
My heart is fain to believe.

I have said in the prime of the noon,
"The night and the day are the same —
The difference but of a name; —
Instead of the sun, the moon.

"And the heart is resting in sleep,
While the shadows that seem to crouch,
Are but drapery over her couch,
As she lies in slumber deep."

But when the rose of the West
Has followed after the sun,
And the fall of the dew has begun
To moisten the forest's crest,

Then a spirit glides from the dome,
And fills the ambient space
With the glow of his unseen face —
With the light of his radiant home.

When the gleam of the stars combine
With the cold moon's vivid sheen,
I have heard — nay, almost seen —
The words of a thought divine.

They whisper of things sublime ;
Of the endless vistas of light,
Where the angels are treading the height
That 't is hard for a mortal to climb.

They whisper of thymy slopes
In the gardens of Paradise,
Where the victors o'er folly and vice
Are singing their finished hopes.

A solemn and masterful awe
Falls over the conquered mind,
Like invisible chains that bind
With a strong and mysterious law.

'T is a faintly echoing chime
From the songs of the peopled vast,
Songs of a heavenly past,
And the full completion of time,

Sung by the rythmic spheres,
And the grand celestial throng !
'T is a thrill of a noble song
That is not for human ears.

GARFIELD.

Now hangs a heavy shadow o'er the land,
Thrown vast and dark from Death's afflicting hand,
And round the earth a sombre veil is spread,
In universal mourning for the dead.

So large a grief is this, wherein we feel
Emotion sorrow only can reveal,
And, lifted up to a prophetic height,
See, through the darkness, the immortal light.

The soldier, scholar, patriot, statesman, sage,
Whom nations ranked a giant of his age; —
The man we loved more closely than we knew,
Has bid his country and the world adieu.

Death can but write on monumental scrolls
What life has graven on a million souls —
A nation's love, the epitaph sublime
That shines eternal on the front of time.

It is enough that o'er his martyred clay
All patriot hearts will drop a wreath to-day,
And plant with flowers the garden of his tomb,
To make its glory greater than its gloom.

More than he was no man need ask to be —
As good as great, and both in high degree ;
He knew to live but one consistent part,
And matched a statesman's with a Christian's heart.

He has not perished who bequeathed to earth
The fruitful memory of so rich a worth,
And, in his viewless passage, leaves behind
The priceless mantle of so great a mind.

THROUGH THE GATE.

There is more happiness in the death of some
Than in the lives of many.

I recall
How once, upon a summer afternoon,
A Christian fell asleep.

The very air
For reverence hushed its music-laden breath ;
The leaves, that whispered to each other, ceased ;
The winged voices of the earth were still ; —
As when a harp whose many strings do throb
Melodiously beneath the master's hand
Is quieted into a solemn pause,
As sweet as music, so that mighty harp
Whose restless chords had played all day for man
The fragments of old Paradisal hymns,
Resolved itself to a harmonious peace.

There was no gloom — the sunlight, stealing slant
Between the parted window-draperies,

Traced on the wall — as if an angel's hand
Had written there in golden characters
The happy message of the outer world.

The heart of Nature, calm and beautiful,
Expressed, methought, a kind of tenderness
For her whose eyes, of half their lustre robbed
By the departing soul, looked out and saw,
As in a dream, our little company,
Regarding, through the tears we could not check,
The lamp of her existence, once so bright,
Paling and glimmering down the vaults of Death.

She knew each face, and smiled in every one;
She touched each hand with farewell tenderness
That gave, as 't were, an energy divine
To the enfeebled clasp. A touch like that
Might win a soul to Heaven — so strong is love,
The magnet of the universe, that draws
The yearning spirit to the breast of God.

Half-moving on her pillow, she essayed
In vain to speak ; but, by the wandering gaze

And fingers groping out, we understood
That one should read, whereat the book she loved
Was brought and laid beside her, and a voice,
Unshaken, like the rest, but full of faith,
And rich in harmony, repeated o'er —
Half from the pages, half from memory —
The lofty and triumphant eloquence
That burst inspired from the apostle's heart
To strengthen, comfort and exalt mankind.
Oh, infinite Book ! Thy depths are like the sea,
Fathomless and unfathomed ; wonderful
In beauty ; glorious in magnificence ;
Profound in peace, and in sublimity
Most terrible, beyond the heights of thought ;
God's sunshine kisses thee ; His lightnings flame,
His thunders roll, through all thy moods of power ;
The whispers of Omnipotence pervade
Thy deep and sacred mysteries ; thy waves
Are balm and bitterness, repose and storm,
Despair and hope — we tremble, yet are glad.
The awful spaces of eternity
O'er-arch thee, and innumerable lives
Shed o'er thee, like the everlasting stars,
The benedictions of another world.

How often had she laved her heart in thee,
To cool its earthly fevers, and renew
Her confidence, her patience, love and faith,
From their exhaustless source! for she excelled
In every attribute which makes a woman
The intermediate angel of our race.
She reckoned all the sufferings of this life
As nothing to the glory unrevealed,
And never dreamed to barter for a bauble
Her spiritual riches. Thus it was
That when her mortal burden dropped and sank
Into the abyss of oblivion,
She needed not, like miserable souls
Whose all is in this perishable frame,
To weep its loss, but radiantly clothed
In incorruptible habiliments —
The bridal garments of celestial love —
She joined the beatific multitude
Which moves, rejoicing, through the gates of pearl,
There to sit down at the Redeemer's feet
With Abraham and Isaac and with Jacob,
And know how great a bliss it is to sow
And reap the fruits of immortality.

Methought the presence of divinity
Folded us in its shadow, as the words
Dropped from the reader's fervid lips like dew
To soothe the ache and burning of our hearts.

Supreme enthusiasm, yet subdued,
Winged with new courage our imperfect faith ;
For never shall I see again on earth
So much of death in life, so much of light
Break through this fleshly veil, as in that hour.

UNDER THE MOON.

Oh, boys, wherever you are to-night
Beneath the arch of this virgin light —
In the home love, by the shrine of prayer,
On the prairie's wilds, in the city's glare,
In the halls of art, or the siren's den,
With the lures of vice, or the scholar's pen —
Whate'er the phantom of life you pursue,
One fancy I have that is faithful to you.

The sorrows of many a by-gone year
Seem mingled and lost in the shadows here,
But the noblest pleasures and thoughts we knew
Like spirits throng in the dusky blue,
As indistinct as the moonlight falls
Over the distant horizon walls,
Yet each ethereally bright,
Clear, warm and pure as the mellow night.

They seem a part of the moonlight space,
And every beam has a human face,
That comes and goes on the silver stream
That bears the world in a quiet dream.
In that vast silence methinks they part,
To seek each one a kindred heart,
And bear to the musing and yearning breast
The message of a divine unrest.

The moon lies deep in the tranquil lake,
And the ripples, like scattered jewels, break,
Till the merry flash of a sunny eye
Gleams from the water that murmurs by;
The night-hawk wheels with his drowsy call
Betwixt the stars and the forest wall,
And the muffled echoes repeat once more
Your jocund voices from shore to shore.

The woods, like royal mourners, shed
Their rustling tresses of saffron and red,
And your footsteps dance, as they did of old,
Across a carpet of shrifted gold.
The trees bend down with a swelling sigh
To whisper of summers that never die,

And the softened tone of your graver mood
Breathes through the peopled solitude.

Old friends, and faithful to death, are these:
The moon, the lake, and the stately trees;
And though beneath other stars you gaze
On heaven's bewildering, glittering maze —
By other waters though you may stand
To hear the ripples along the sand,—
Yet Nature's voices will rise to bear
The same old message by earth and air.

Ah, never believe that Time can bestow
A greater measure of heaven below
Than alone in the midst of your thoughts to recall
No thought whose dark presence can sadden them all.
That such be your lot is the theme of my prayer
Cast out on the breast of the listening air,
While I stand at the feet of the pensive night,
Under the arch of this virgin light.

IN MEMORIAM.

When greatness falls, which states and empires mourn,
A shock throughout the shuddering world is borne,
As if our dull machinery of clay
Flashed Heaven's own fire along its rusty way,
And winged the sound of that ethereal flame
With the the sad utterance of a single name.

Garfield ! — our hero, martyr, yea — and saint,
Whom lavish sorrow vainly strives to paint,
If admiration should o'erleap her end,
And love exalt thee more than she intend,
What power shall set the limit of thy praise,
Save the cold censure of remoter days ?
Then may men say, "His faults were such and such —
His virtues have been blazoned overmuch."
But in the glow and impulse of the time
Thy faults are shadows in a torrid clime.
Enthusiasm's but the name of Truth
Ere she has lost the ardor of her youth,

And 't is not oft that she will stoop to weigh
The words affection is inspired to say.

Yet it is not the *pity* of thy death
That warms to fire the eulogistic breath —
Death cannot make, nor can it uncreate ;
'T was life that gave thee title to be great.
Beside thy bed a tearful people stood,
And watched thee waste in suffering martyrhood,
Till the last gleam of life's uncertain spark,
Died from the sight, and left a nation dark.
They saw thee still, in every phase of life —
The gentle husband of as true a wife,
The Christian father, the chivalrous son —
Till the last duty of thy race was done.
Ah, who that looked upon thy final sleep
Could e'er forbid his sorrowing eyes to weep —
Feeling how strangely, eloquently grand
Was the last touch of life's enfeebled hand !

Upon thy face, in that tremendous hour,
Could well be read the impress of thy power,
And in the aspect of each wrinkled line
Remained some vestige of the flame divine ;

As when the sun is lost below the hill,
A flush of glory tints the twilight still.
Then could they trace, as from an angel's pen,
The massive genius, ne'er to rule again ;
The moving speech, the intellect profound,
On virtue based, and by that virtue crowned ;
Patience unmoved by agony or wrong ;
An iron faith to suffer and be strong.
Unaltered still, by Providence or fate,
It was thy very nature to be great.

Alas ! how few has God upraised like thee,
Whose soul and mind were balanced in degree,
Who, though thou hadst the laurels of the race,
Let not ambition lure thee to disgrace.

Nor shall the worshipped heroes of the past
Be named with thee in glory's trumpet blast.
What heart e'er loved the Cæsars of the world,
Whose ruthless banners tyranny unfurled ;
Who stained the earth and crimsoned every flood
To leave mankind a legacy of blood ?
But thou, oh, nobler conqueror, canst afford
A better witness than a warrior's sword,

Although thou stood'st in freedom's foremost rank
When slavery to its just perdition sank.
Without a monarch's power, a trickster's art,
Thou hast subdued the hate of every heart.
Thy hand, stretched out from Death's approaching gloom,
Bowed e'en thy foemen to lament thy doom,
And joined the links of love's dissevered chain
In the last travail of thy fatal pain.
When Cæsar fell, scant rev'rence was his due ;
But thy dread fall a sorrowing world doth rue.

O, great Departed ! Wheresoe'er thy soul
In loftier spheres hath gained a new control,
Methinks, whate'er thou gain'st of power or bliss,
Full oft thou'lt turn from other worlds to this,
And joy to hear, amid that kindred throng,
Thy name roll heavenward in a nation's song ;
And, for the sacred guerdon of thy pain,
To know Columbia has not wept in vain.

MINNETONKA.

There is a lake embosomed in the West —
Set like a jewel in the billowy folds
Of Nature's green, luxurious drapery.
Here, in midsummer, when the stately woods
That skirt the sinuous borders of the lake
Are greenest ; when the lightest breezes fan
The leafy banks that top the lofty trees,
And fret the buoyant surface of the waves
To foamy ripples — here the wearied eye,
The labored footstep, and the troubled mind,
Love best to seek among secluded haunts
The rest denied them by the vexing world.
Here Nature's fingers press most tenderly
On grateful foreheads, and her warmest kiss
Consoles the chafed, impatient heart of care ;
Here she pursues her own harmonious thoughts,
And links her fancies in a thousand charms,
Not overwrought, and gaudy of device,

Like man's inventions, surfeiting the eye,
But like the unconscious beauty of a child,
As full of innocence as loveliness,
That wins a smile, although we scarce know why.

Yea, this, oh, Nature, is thy favorite shrine,
Sacred to thee! But who of all that trace
Their lingering footprints on these yielding sands,
And look with careless laughter in thy face,
Can teach the music to another heart
That fills his own, arouse an absent friend
To admiration, sympathy, and love,
For what enchants him here?
If I could paint,
In language rich and eloquent as thine,
And sing in thy melodious cadences
Thine attributes of quiet loveliness,
The thoughts of those whose eyes have looked on thee
Would throng these shores, and every thought would bear
A silent witness to my humble praise.
If Fancy, like a bird whose flight descends
And lightly meets thy waters, could but dip
Her heavenward wings into thy healing breast,

And steal from thence invigorating balm
To cool the fever of a mind distressed,
Refresh the fainting lives that drag along
Their endless progress over dusty ways,
And quench the thirst of parching misery,
How many a soul would lift to Heaven again
Its hopeless vision, by that touch inspired
To new existence, like a drooping flower
That feels the fresh baptism of the dew !

Oh, such is the divinity of song !
And such his purpose who aspires to sing
To other souls of what they feel themselves ;
For Nature sings to all mankind of peace —
Peace and good-will — and one continual song
Of infinite contentment, love and hope
She croons through all the halcyon summer days,
And here she broods, among her pensive shades,
Above the heart-sick folly of the world,
And cradles restless spirits into rest.

Come, let us go ; the woods are calling us
With long, low murmurs — thither will we roam,
Among the breezy labyrinths of shade —

Rare nooks of verdure, where the mottled light
Toys with the grasses, as the trembling leaves,
With idle flutterings, sway their slender fingers,
And wave their shadows on the velvet ground.
Here pause and look between the sylvan veil
With hungry eyes, unsatiate with delight,
Like one who sits before a laden feast,
While all about him ring the laugh and cheer,
And quaffs the wine with long and lingering draughts,
That breed delicious fancies in his brain
Of his own vineyards in another land.

Down yonder slope that fronts the pebbled sands
The supple grasses point their bending spears,
With slow, uneasy motion, to the lake ;
And thither do we turn our wandering eyes,
Moved by no impulse save the sweet caprice
Of our own pleasure.
From the dripping stones,
That glisten with the water's smooth caress,
To yonder distant woodlands, crowned with blue,
Whose dimmest top salutes the vagrant sight,
A dreamy power, descending like a dove
With golden wings and silver-tinted breast,

Hovers serenely and enfolds the world.
The shining ripples break from light to light,
And glitter for a moment in the sun,
Then sink away, to rise and fall again.
Mark how yon sails do stretch their snowy wings
Like far-off birds that skim the water 's edge
As if to light ! Ah, whither do they go ?
To which of all these hermit tents that hide
Behind the friendly pillars of the trees
Their modest curtains ? Yonder sail, perhaps,
Bears some worn merchant from the clink of gold
To count awhile the wealth of happiness ;
Some scholar from his books, to ponder here
One simple page from the Immortal pen ;
Some poet, from his shallow, tinkling rhymes,
To learn the rhythm of the winds and trees,
The accents of the water, and the chimes
Of birds that call him from his sleep at morn ;
Some listless slave of pleasure, who has learned
To love his mistress in her simplest garb ;
Or some wan sufferer, fleeing from disease,
Dips shrunken fingers in the dashing waves,
And dreams of health and happy days to come.
Oh, golden day, thy peace be with them all,

Circled by Nature's arms and lulled to rest
By mingled voices, singing, as in dreams,
The drowsy incantation of repose.

On yonder isle, through whose entangled depths
The fervent sun scarce threads a narrow way
With solitary beams, the herons build
Their lofty homes ; for unknown centuries
Have they been constant to their trysting-place,
And still, from those hereditary nests,
Their broods rise up and circle on the wing,
And wheel above the nestling bays that lie
Behind the misty headlands ; underneath
Their lordly flight the sapphire lake reflects
The blush of heaven; the altars of the sun
Are newly lighted with a brighter flame
To beacon his departure o'er the world ;
Lift up your eyes ! there's not a western cloud
But hath a dye of crimson on its breast,
And every cloud doth like a curtain hang
Before the sky ; but still between the folds
That part their silver fringes stream the rays
Of day's majestic king, whose going out
Is prouder than the glory of his reign.

The earth is sleeping, and she dreams of Heaven !
If there's a tear upon her glowing cheek,
The sun will dry it with the amorous touch
Of his bejewelled fingers; if there be
One shadow on her brow, it will but serve
To make her smiles more radiantly glad !
Sleep on, oh, Earth ! the gates of Paradise
Swing open to thy dreams ! the guardian swords
That dazzled Eden with seraphic fire
Flash down from every snowy battlement
Their flaming splendor on the forest's verge.
A molten sea expands its shining flood
To undiscovered shores, where haply lies
Some wondrous country, whose Elysian fields
Bloom with all glories born of sun and stars ;
Where happier birds, with richer plumage, gleam
Among the groves, and pour with wilder stress
Their music on the fragrant atmosphere.

A looming cloud, like some celestial slope,
Tinged with the roseate color of the hour,
Uplifts its massive summit ; at its feet
The drifted vessels of the sky drop down

To sunlit ports, and furl their viewless sails
In waveless bays, by shores of rustling green.

Now fade the brilliant curtains of the sky,
And down the west the transient glory sinks
Into the bosom of the ebbing sea
From which it came, till only yonder clouds
Are fringed with red, a lurid, burning hue —
And o'er the lake a parting radiance falls,
A somber, weird magnificence, that fills
The hollow ripples with prismatic fire —
A last, reluctant prophecy of night.

MY FATHER'S HOUSE.

I.

Oh, God, the world is very dark! I hear
(As one whose ear is keen for sounds of woe)
The mindless creatures of the atmosphere
Sweeping along the billows of the snow,
Now swift, and now funereally slow,

Hurling about the white and desolate sea,
In wailing blasts, the winter's frosty foam,
Like some lost spirit, miserably free,
To wander blind beneath a starless dome,
Without a Heaven — as I without a home.

II.

Alas! what memories of unvalued years
Torment his mind who stands upon the brink
Of hope and love! Oh, what self-pitying tears
His hesitating agony must drink
Whene'er he stops remorsefully to think!

Innumerable faces, loved and lost,
And happy pictures he would hide in vain,
Among his thoughts are feverishly tossed,
And voices of unutterable pain
Make chaos in the midnight of his brain.

III.

For now methinks the dial of my life
Has shifted to the point where all is dark —
The dreadful hour that calms the pulse of strife,
When Death's black flood o'erleaps its tidal mark,
And washes out existence like a spark!

Oh, Nature, Mother Nature, if to be
In peace upon thy bosom, and to part
The chords of time forever were to die!
But who will trust thee, fickle as thou art,
Or know what secrets slumber in thy heart?

* * * * * * * * *

There is some one singing above, where the windows
are all aflame
With the silver brilliance that streams from the starry
chandeliers;

The voice is an alien one, but the song, ah, that is the same !
What passionate fools are we, that a sound can move us to tears !

More pain is wrought by music than ever this world dreams of ;
It lures the credulous fancy with visions that flash and fade,
As when we reach our hands, in dreams, to a phantom above,
And wake to find it is nothing, and all is silence and shade.

Oh, beautiful spirit, peace ! — You bring no comfort to me !
You are sweet, but bitterly sweet ; you are fair, but deathly fair ;
You marshal up from the past the faces I would not see,
And I am weary, — weary ! — and stumble in very despair.

I heard one saying, "Come ; there is light and music within."

"Sir," I replied, "I am searching for rest;" and he smiled with a nod :

"Here you shall find it — rest— rest from all sorrow and sin.

There is rest, and light, and music — all three — in the kingdom of God."

"Sir, I am beggared and vile" ; but he said, as quick as before,

"Here we need no money — come, take and eat without price ;

The water of life is free," — and he drew me in at the door,

Whispering, "He that repents is nearest to Paradise."

There was one who stood in the midst whose visage seemed to shine

With an inward light, like an ember that glows to the center with heat ;

And methought that his beaming eyes looked wistfully into mine,

As he read from the olden Book I had trodden under my feet.

"Come," he said—and the word seemed to hang upon
his lips,—
"All ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Why do ye linger more in your vile companionships,
Feeding on swinish husks, naked and sorely oppressed?

"Come to my Father's house, all ye who are far away;
There the household of Christ, that nothing will ever
disperse,
Gathers age by age, and there they are singing to-day
The lyrics of peace that ring all over the universe.

"Where's he's that's athirst? The hand of my Father
has poured
The water of life for him — let him come and drink
it to-night.
Where is he that hungers? Come, sit at my Father's
board;
A banquet for all the world is spread in the halls of
light.

"Oh, my brothers, my sisters, like children wilfully
proud,

Ye wander away in the gloom; away from the
Father's door,
Until, perhaps, the voice that was calling you far and
loud
Will die in Eternity's hush, and be silent forevermore.

"But now ye can hear the tone of his patient and
pleading call
Echo through sunless wilds of hidden crime and
distress;
Oh, give back the cry, before you stumble and fall,
And your feet go down in the pit that is miry and
bottomless.

"Hear John, from the Isle of Patmos — oh, I can see
him still,
Crowned and clothed with glory, there by the
Heaven-lit sea —
'Let him that is thirsty come, and whosoever will
Let him drink of the water of life that is everlasting
and free.'"

THE SACRED CHAMBER.

There is a chamber in the human heart
Whose windows look across Elysian fields ;
Rivers that wash their smooth and diamond sands
With crystal waves, unchilled by gloom or storm ;
Woods of immortal verdure, where the breath
Of happy spirits stirs among the leaves
In peaceful whispers ; hills upon whose slopes
Perpetual sunlight, like a golden veil,
Unwoven with shadows, wraps the inhabitants
In the bright garb of immortality ;
Meadows—like those which childhood loves to haunt—
Where smiling infinite multitudes of flowers,
Rich with the tints of Heaven, paint every knoll
And velvet hollow, and allure the steps
Of charmed wanderers with fragrant shapes,
Of the Divine Imagination born
For spiritual pleasure ; brooks that dash
Harmonious sounds from every shining stone,
And make such an unwearying melody

That listening seraphs catch the flowing chords
And link the hills of Paradise with song !

Oh, sacred chamber ! At its humble door
No curious footstep ever cares to pause ;
The jeering voice of reckless blasphemy
Breaks not the reverent silence of its peace ;
The dwarfish passions of humanity
Linger not near it, for its holiness
Weighs like a condemnation on their heads.

Power, with the engines of ambitious scorn,
And Bigotry, with iron, bloody hands,
Have beat against its adamantine door
The ineffectual tempests of their wrath,
Till, worn with fury, they have crept away,
Spent with the madness of their own revenge.
Yet still across that chamber falls the light
Of Paradise, and through the windows steal
The benisons of spiritual lives,
Borne on the zephyrs of eternity !

Here lonely age shall put his staff aside,
And feel the promise of undying youth

Stir in his veins, by sorrows half congealed.
Here the frail child, neglected by mankind,
Shall lay her fingers in the hands of God,
And her meek lips forget their trembling speech
In saintly converse with another world.
Here the wan mother, from whose patient cheek
Time's hand has stolen loveliness and youth,
May lean her head upon angelic breasts
And dream of rest, unutterably dear
To weary Love ; the disappointed fools
Who track wild Fortune through her mazy haunts,
Shall yearn for such a cloister when the night
Of Death, or some unthought calamity,
Surrounds them, and their miserable deeds
Rise up, like phantoms, to convict their lives.
And well for them if such divine repose
Shall crown their fruitless wanderings, and they die
Beneath the shelter which had been a jest
In the vainglorious noontide of their days.

Oh, Blessed chamber ! they who enter it,
Though they be clowns, shall have the grace of kings ;
Though they be mocked, oppressed, and spit upon
By the proud world, seraphic dignity

Shall clothe them with a mantle dropped from Heaven !
Bathed in the holy sunlight of the place,
The waiting soul looks out with tranquil eyes
Across the visioned future, leans to feel
Balm-laden winds refresh the brow of thought,
And listens in the pensiveness of faith
To hear deep echoes of enraptured tongues
Repeat the whisper of immortal hope.

LITTLE NELL IN THE CHURCH-TOWER.

Sitting in the old gray tower,
  Round whose venerable height
  Fades the last pale thread of light
Into twilight's sombre hour ;
Rapt in infinite content,
  With the Bible on her knee,
  Sometimes in my thought I see
The pale watcher as she bent,
Motionless and reverent,
  O'er the page, and felt a new,
Perfect meaning, as she read,
  Like a vision shining through,
From the spaces overhead.

Nearer Heaven than earth she seems,
  With her slight and wasted frame,
Full of spiritual dreams,

Only earthly in the name ;
And the moonlight's dawning beams
Seem to shed an aureole
On the drooping crown of hair,
And a blessing on the soul
That is resting from its care.

Up from meadow, brook and heath,
Wood and hill and drowsy town ;
From the ghostly aisles beneath,
Where the moonlight trembles down ;
From the chamber of the dead,
At whose greenly curtained door
Much she loves to ponder o'er
Lives unwritten and unread,—
Steals a mild, prophetic breath,
Whisp'ring of a life to cease —
'T is the pursuivant of Death,
Bearing messages of Peace.

Oh, what heart that beats for love
Doubts that somehow Love can draw,
Through the veil of mournful law,
Sunlight from a world above ?

And that spiritual sense,
Like the fragrance of a flower
Hidden by the evening hour,
Is immortal recompense
For a failing earthly power!

All her wanderings are complete;
All her silent grief and fears,
All her weariness and tears,
Sink like shadows at her feet,
Where all earthly pathways meet
By that river in whose tide
Human footsteps melt away
From the sight of them who stay,
Weeping, at the river-side.

Oh, they say that she was laid
In the quaint old burial-ground,
Where each year the cherished mound
Blossoms in the summer shade,
Where the flowers she loved so well —
Emblems of a lovelier soul —
Scatter from the humble knoll
Memories of Little Nell.

But I love the best to think
That she sits alone with God
In the old, time-hallowed place —
Not a creature of the sod,
Faltering on destruction's brink,
But of a celestial race,
And with glory in her face
Such as mortal never wore,
Save at Heaven's open door.

CHRIST'S COMPANIONSHIP.

Let me come more near to Thee,
Christ, my Savior, Christ, my king ;
Stretch Thine arms so close to me
I can grasp thy hands and cling.

I am nothing, if not Thine —
Nothing, if I cannot plead
That Thy sacrifice divine
Answers my immortal need.

Let me suffer what I may,
  Let me tread on thorns of woe ;
So Thy feet are on the way,
  I am fearless where I go.

If Thou talkest with my soul,
  Every other voice may cease —
All the world, from pole to pole,
  All the universe, is peace.

Who can say he is alone,
  Though from all he walks apart,
If he hears Thy blessed tone
  Fill the spaces of his heart ?

Thou art with me, oh, my Lord !
  Let that tender thought suffice.
All my toil is but reward,
  All my sorrow, Paradise !

SONNET — PATIENCE.

My prayer is but for patience — strength to bear
  Whate'er of grief or weariness is mine ;
  Patience to watch the star whose light will shine
Above the unknown haven of my prayer,
Beyond regret, or sorrow, or despair ;
  Patience to feel that purposes divine,
  Like threads of golden adamant, entwine
Among the chains that we are doomed to wear ;
Patience to climb life's mist-enshrouded height
  With doubtful steps, or, pausing by the way,
Await the dawn of the o'erwhelming light,
  Whose rays shall sweep the heavy gloom away,
And show Heaven's far-off country to my sight,
  Bathed in the glow of God's transcendent day.

TRIBUTES TO FRIENDSHIP.

TO MISS ——.

As one who tosses in fever,
And weeps alone in the dark,
Hears through his glimmering lattice
The heavenward song of the lark,
And, looking up from his pallet,
For a sign of the coming day,
Sees, on the floor of his chamber,
A slender and golden ray ;

So to my restless conscience,
In its gloom of unsatisfied pain,
Your voice floated sweet through the darkness
That hung over spirit and brain,
And methought thro' the black-curtained windows
That oped from my shadowy soul,
A beam of the light everlasting
From the morning of Paradise stole.

Perhaps, when the infinite splendor
That rolls from Eternity's throne
Pours full on that holy assembly
Whom God has entitled his own,
And when your beatified spirit
Bursts forth in its happiest song,
You will know and be glad that your music
Has gathered one soul to that throng.

TO MISS C. D.

Men love to say, "The world is wide!"
Yet some few narrow strips of earth
Hold all their sorrow, all their pride,
Their dreams of love, their hours of mirth.

Oh, narrow spots! but, oh, how dear,
How rich their soil, from whence upspring
The flowers of life we cherish here,
And whence our heavenward thoughts take wing!

Whene'er your constant memories turn
To that one spot we both possess,

And your pure fancies brighter burn
In radiant flames of happiness,

Then grant this simple boon to me —
Whom you unconsciously have taught —
Among your reveries to be
Companion of a wandering thought.

TO MISS L. K., ON HER MARRIAGE.

Although we regret that we cannot be present
To see you launch forth in the vessel of bliss,
Yet we trust that the voyage will always be pleasant,
And the last of its days be as happy as this.

'T is a dangerous journey, and sometimes, no doubt,
The sea will grow dark and the tempest arise !
Yet see that the lamp of your love go not out,
Nor the heaven of hope grow less bright in your eyes.

Remember through life that the oath which you take
Is given to God, and recorded above ;

He knows and forgives all the blunders we make
When the wound and the kiss are both given by love.

Be married in soul, that is marriage alone;
God himself is the minister, angels the guests,
And a cloud of His witnesses compass the throne
To smile on the wedlock of innocent breasts.

TO F. E. C., ON THE OCCASION OF HIS MARRIAGE.

If marriage be the heaven that lovers say,
I could not wish you happier than to-day;
But, love, methinks, is like the upward sun,
Whose earliest glory is its faintest one —
The first soft flush that steals across the sight
Is but the promise of the coming light!
And so, I trust, the orb of love will rise
With warmer radiance for your happy eyes,
Each year diviner in its cloudless rays,
Until it reach the sunset of your days,
And wrapped in Time's last quiet glow of peace,
Pass to the world where love can never cease!

And if some shadows of your lot recall
The gloom of care that lowers for us all,
Oh, may they be such shadows as are cast
By summer's pleasant woods, where you have passed
Among the cooling arbors of the trees,
And felt the grateful touches of the breeze!
Such be your path — your worth deserves the meed
That only crowns the man who loves indeed,
And for that sacred gift of Heaven — his wife —
Pledges with truth his honor and his life!

TO MISS F. C.

Upon the field of Friendship I will set
Some small memorial of a happy day,
That you may look thereon and not forget
How quickly friends are doomed to pass away.
How many happy hours we spend
Whose deepest joy we ne'er express,
But carry outward to the end
A secret store of happiness!
Some flower of thought which will not die;
Some gem whose lustre will not dim;

Some strain of music floating by,
Friendship's perpetual vesper hymn ; —
All these, I trust, or some of these,
Shall sweeten memory for you,
Like ripples of a fragrant breeze
Upon a glassy lake of blue.

TO W. D.

A friend in the ranks of your friends I have set
A landmark of memory here for your sake,
That sometimes, when musing, you may not forget,
My link in the chain that no sorrow can break.

TO MISS M. C. C.

There are some women who appear
Half alien to our common sphere,
So much they seem above mankind
In sweet divinity of mind.

Apart from none they seem to stand,
Yet check the world's profaning hand
By that pure atmosphere of good
Which circles all true womanhood.

Oh, to be one of such as these
Gives strength to suffer, power to please,
And more than beauty, wealth or place,
A Christian heart, a Christian face.

TO C. H., A FELLOW CRAFTSMAN.

We do not set the volumes of our lives
By days or weeks, but moments—every breath,
Word, look and motion in its place survives,
To make the book whose clasp is forged by Death.
Type upon type, and line succeeding line,
Page upon page, until the whole is done,
And read by God's unerring eye Divine.
None can correct it saving Christ, his Son.
Oh, therefore, set your life, in thought and deed,
As for your Maker, not mankind, to read.

LINES SET UP IN HIS BROTHER'S COMPOSING STICK.

Word by word and line by line,
With our silent thoughts between,
Do we set the book of life—
See that every proof is clean.

Why sing ye of Death as an angel of black,
Who takes from our hearts what will never come back?
And why are your faces so sombre with dread
When ye look on the house of a soul that is fled?

Oh, hushed be your dirges — they jar on the sound
Of the music that hallows the silence around;
Should mortals lament *

* (See concluding paragraph of the INTRODUCTION to this volume.)

YC 16124

963814

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY